

FROM SAHAGÚN TO THE MAINSTREAM:
FLAWED REPRESENTATIONS OF LATIN
AMERICAN CULTURE IN IMAGE AND TEXT

By

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Bachelor of Arts in Art History and History

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2016

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
May, 2018

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AMERICAN CULTURE IN IMAGE AND TEXT

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge my advisor, Dr. Cristina Cruz González, and offer my thanks and appreciation of her guidance and patience throughout this research and writing process. Without her support and encouragement to pursue this topic, my thesis would not have evolved into the final product that it has.

Second, I would like to thank Dr. Rebecca Brien for her many insightful comments and suggestions that helped to strengthen and perfect my writing.

Third, I offer a special thank-you to Dr. Laura Arata for her willingness to step forward and join my thesis committee with limited notice when unforeseen events occurred in the final months of completing this project.

Finally, I am forever grateful for my friends and family who have supported me in my academic career. Thank you for allowing me to choose my own path and work towards the things I am most passionate about. Without you, I would not be where I am today.

Name: OLIVIA HUFFSTETTER

Date of Degree: MAY, 2018

Title of Study: FROM SAHAGÚN TO THE MAINSTREAM: FLAWED
REPRESENTATIONS OF LATIN AMERICAN CULTURE IN IMAGE
AND TEXT

Major Field: ART HISTORY

Abstract:

Early European travel literature was a prominent source from which information about the New World was presented to a general audience. Geographic regions situated within what is now referred to as Latin America were particularly visible in these accounts. Information regarding the religious customs and styles of dress associated with the indigenous peoples who inhabited these lands were especially curious points of interest to the European readers who were attempting to understand the lifestyles of these so-called “savages.” These reports, no matter their sources, always claimed to be true and accurate descriptions of what they were documenting. Despite these claims, it is clear that the dominant Western/Christian perspective from which these sources were derived established an extremely visible veil of bias. As a result, the texts and images documenting these accounts display highly flawed and misinformed representations of indigenous Latin American culture. Although it is now understood that these sources were often greatly exaggerated, the texts and images within them are still widely circulated in present-day museum exhibitions. When positioned in this framework, they are meant to be educational references for the audiences that view them. However, museums often condense the amount of information they provide, causing significant details of historical context to be excluded.

With such considerable omission being common in museum exhibitions, it causes one to question if this practice might be perpetuating the distribution of misleading information. Drawing on this question, I seek, with this research, to investigate how early European representations of Latin American culture in travel literature may be linked to current issues of misrepresentation. Particularly, my research is concerned with finding connections that may be present with these texts and images and the negative aspects of cultural appropriation. Looking specifically at representations of Aztec culture, I consult three texts and their accompanying illustrations from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries to analyze their misrepresentational qualities, and how they differed between time periods and regions. Finally, I use this information to analyze museum exhibition practices and how they could be improved when displaying complex historical frameworks like those of indigenous Latin American cultures.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

During a visit to the special collections library at the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma as part of an Art of Sixteenth-Century Mexico course, I was struck by an image located in John Ogilby's *America* (fig1.).¹ This image, showing a depiction of the Aztec deity Huitzilopochtli, was unlike any illustration of the god that I had seen before. As a student of art history, whose interests have always been situated within the broader themes of Latin American art, my curiosity toward this image was heightened. This curiosity, in turn, formed the initial basis for my thesis project of examining the ways in which non-Western religious figures were depicted by European artists. However, as I began to consider the structuring of my research questions, I was also led to reflect on the more current ideas about cultural appropriation and how these two topics may be linked. It is these two frameworks, then, from which the broader question of my thesis research has been informed. Specifically, I sought to understand how early European representations of Latin American culture have contributed to, and how they have maintained, the processes and circumstances of cultural appropriation.

¹ The full original title of this work is *America: Being the Latest, and Most Accurate Description of the NEVV VWorld; Containing the Original of the Inhabitants, and the Remarkable Voyages thither. The Conquest Vast Empires of Mexico and Peru, and other Large Provinces and Territories, with the Several European Plantations in those Parts. Also Their Cities, Fortresses, Towns, Temples, Mountains, and Rivers. Their Habits, Customs, Manners, and Religions. Their Plants, Beasts, and Serpents.* In this study, it will be referred to simply as, *America*.

Because this research question is almost limitless, it was necessary to narrow the topic by choosing a specific culture to examine, as well as what forms of representation to discuss. In order to structure this project within these boundaries, I have chosen to address representations of Aztec peoples and their culture. Special attention will be given to their religion and their style of dress. Due to the popular fascination surrounding this culture's stereotypical image of violence and grandeur, as well as its fall to Spanish conquest in the sixteenth-century, the Aztec civilization has been the subject of countless works of art and literature.² Therefore, focusing on this culture in particular proved to be a strategic choice because it is one of the most recognizable names from the age of European exploration and the colonial era. However, access to this expansive collection of information has also required a selective approach in order to structure this research.

To support the questions guiding this thesis, I have selected three works from which both text and images will be examined. These selections include early ethnographical works, as well as early works that resemble the formats of encyclopedias and atlases. The first selection, Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia general de las cosas de nueva Espana*, or as it is more commonly referred to, the *Florentine Codex*, will act as the foundational source.³ Completed between the years of 1578 and 1579, when the illustrations were added, the work of the codex is an example of cultural depictions produced by indigenous artists.⁴ Although the illustrations of the *Florentine Codex* were produced under the influence of Spanish friars, the fact that they were physically drawn by indigenous hands suggests that they still maintain a significant essence of

² For more details on this stereotypical image, see Benjamin Keen's *The Aztec Image in Western Thought* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1971).

³ The translation that I reference is: Arthur J. O. Anderson, Charles E. Dibble, and Jay I. Kislak Reference Collection, *General History of the Things of New Spain: Florentine Codex*, Monographs of the School of American Research; No. 14, Pt. 1-13 (Santa Fe and Salt Lake City: School of American Research; University of Utah, 1950).

⁴ Ellen T. Baird, "Sahagún and the Representation of History," in *Sahagún at 500: Essays on the Quincentenary of the Birth of Fr. Bernardino de Sahagún*, ed. by John Fredrick Schwaller (Berkley: Academy of Franciscan History, 2003), 117. From this point on, I will refer to Sahagún's work as the Florentine Codex rather than *Historia general de las cosas de nueva Espana* for sake of causing any confusion to this study.

their true iconographical elements.⁵ This link to a more accurate depiction of the Aztec civilization will then act as a source of comparison to the other two works I have selected to examine that were produced solely by European hands in Europe.

The second work from which images and text depicting the Aztec peoples will be analyzed is John Ogilby's *America*. Published in 1671, this atlas documents the lands of the Americas with special attention given to the conquests of Mexico and Peru as described by European travelers and explorers.⁶ Claiming, as the complete title suggests, to be "the latest and most accurate description of the New World," the comparisons present between this work and the *Florentine Codex* are noteworthy (fig.2). In this same fashion, the third and final work that I have chosen to incorporate into this study, is Jean Frederic Bernard and Bernard Picart's *Religious Ceremonies of the World* completed between the years of 1723 and 1743.⁷ Formatted more closely to that of an encyclopedia, this work also represents an instance in which Aztec peoples and their culture are illustrated solely by European hand. Using a selection of images taken from the *Florentine Codex*, Ogilby's *America*, and Bernard and Picart's *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, I will then address the second component of my thesis question concerning the issues of appropriation among Latin American cultures.

Existing Scholarship

Considering the general scope of this project, there are certain areas of research that are much more difficult to explore. However, there are others where sources are more readily available and, to an extent, almost limitless. To address the questions guiding this research to their fullest potential, it is necessary to draw on a variety of sources that are not concerned solely with the three main texts. Sources that examine the authors of these texts, cultural practices of the

⁵ Baird, "Sahagún and the Representation of History," 117. I choose the term indigenous rather than native so as to not confuse the Aztec peoples with the Native Americans associated with the areas north of present-day Mexico.

⁶ Katherine S. Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times* (Folkstone: Dawson, 1976), 96-97 and 107.

⁷ The original French title of this work is *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde*.

Aztec peoples, print and manuscript culture, Western perspectives of religion and Christianity, and the current understanding of cultural appropriation are all crucial areas that have required reference.

Beginning with one of the most important aspects of this analysis, it is rather fortunate that access to knowledge on the authors of each of the three primary sources used in this research is, in general, easily accessible. Numerous books, articles, and edited volumes have been published regarding the work of Bernardino de Sahagún and his contribution of the *Florentine Codex*. Regarding this aspect of research, one of the most influential sources to this project has been *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth-Century Aztec Mexico*, edited by J. Jorge Klor de Alva, H.B. Nicholson, and Eloise Quiñones Keber.⁸ In this volume, as the title suggests, multiple areas of study surrounding the life and times of Sahagún are integrated, with much attention given to the early forms of ethnographical processes that were executed in order to produce the *Florentine Codex*. Authors of the contributing studies that make up this volume are all focused on the goal of moving “towards more interdisciplinary research” on Sahagún and the *Florentine Codex* respectively.⁹ As this volume was published almost 30 years ago, many of the issues that are discussed within it regarding the need for a more extensive examination of the illustrations within the *Florentine Codex* have indeed been addressed in more recent years.

In a similar volume, titled *Sahagún at 500: Essays on the Quincentenary of the Birth of Fr. Bernardino de Sahagún*, the need for a more interdisciplinary approach is met.¹⁰ The essays in

⁸ Some of the works I address in this volume are- J. Jorge Klor de Alva, “Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography: Representing, Confessing, and Inscribing the Native Other,” 31-52; John Keber, “Sahagún and Hermeneutics: A Christian Ethnographer’s Understanding of Aztec Culture,” 53-64; and Eloise Quiñones Keber, “Reading Images: The Making and Meaning of the Sahaguntine Illustrations,” 199-210.

⁹ J. Jorge Klor de Alva, H.B. Nicholson, and Eloise Quiñones Keber, “Introduction,” in *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth-Century Aztec Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 9.

¹⁰ Some of the works I address in this volume include- Thomas S. Bremer, “Sahagún and the Imagination of Inter-religious Dialogues,” 11-30; Elizabeth H. Boone, “The Multilingual Bivisual World of Sahagún’s

this volume “represent the work of historians, art historians, theologians, and anthropologists,” and are separated into three distinct sections.¹¹ These sections focus on Sahagún in his role as a missionary and cleric, the artistic representations found in his work, and works which seek to “fill holes in the history of the Sahaguntine opus.”¹² Like *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún*, this volume has also been of great influence and assistance to my research endeavors.

Even with the improvements that have been made concerning the study of Sahagún and his works in general, within the last 15 years a significant focus has been given to the illustrative component of discussion that this research addresses. In particular, author Diana Magaloni Kerpel, whose work is featured in *Sahagún at 500*, has succeeded in contributing to the much needed analysis of the artistic components of the *Florentine Codex*. Magaloni Kerpel has published some of the most innovative studies on the *Florentine Codex* in recent years, most notably with her work *The Colors of the New World: Artists, Materials, and the Creation of the Florentine Codex*. In this work, Magaloni Kerpel addresses the *Florentine Codex* from the perspective that documents written in Western cultures have “overshadowed the incredibly rich and creative manuscripts” of New Spain in the sixteenth-century.¹³ Although *The Colors of the New World* is a work of rather short length, Magaloni Kerpel’s attention to detail and ability to acknowledge an aspect so greatly overlooked, has cast new light onto this important historical document and its incredible illustration.

In almost complete opposition to the abundance of scholarly work covering the life of Sahagún, the *Florentine Codex*, Aztec culture, and sixteenth-century Mexico, publications which examine the life and work of John Ogilby and Jean Fredric Bernard and Bernard Picart are

Mexico,” 137-166; and Diana Magaloni Kerpel, “Visualizing the Nahua/Christian Dialogue: Images of the Conquest in Sahagún’s *Florentine Codex* and their Sources,” 193-223.

¹¹ John F. Schwaller, “Introduction,” in *Sahagún at 500: Essays on the Quincentenary of the Birth of Fr. Bernardino de Sahagún* (Berkley: Academy of American Franciscan History, 2003), xi-xii.

¹² Schwaller, “Introduction,” xi-xii.

¹³ Diana Magaloni Kerpel and Cuauhtémoc Medina, *The Colors of the New World: Artists, Materials, and the Creation of the Florentine Codex* (J. Paul Getty Trust, 2014), ix.

extremely limited. To conduct this research, I have only been able to consult two works of extended length that cover the history of John Ogilby and *America*. The first of these works, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, written by Katherine S. Van Eerde is limited in length, but provides a significant overview to the topic.¹⁴ Published in 1976, this was the first work to take on this historical framework. Van Eerde contributes a significant amount of information regarding Ogilby's personal life, but the focus of this study is his more famous endeavor, *Britannia*, rather than *America*.

The second full length source I have consulted for study of Ogilby and *America* is Alan Ereira's *The Nine Lives of John Ogilby: Britain's Master Mapmaker and His Secrets*.¹⁵ Published in 2016, Ereira's work acts as a much more current perspective on the history of Ogilby, providing more information on his life and contributions to the literary world. Unlike Van Eerde, whose main concern was to provide a general overview of Ogilby's life, Ereira approaches his research in an attempt to dissect the professional endeavors of Ogilby and uncover his motivations. However, even with its greater analytical depth, there is still limited attention given to *America*, as Ereira is again focused more on Ogilby's project of *Britannia*. Other sources are also available that address the history surrounding the life and work of Ogilby, but they are either only brief references, or they are studies which do not discuss the work of *America* to any extent. Therefore, Van Eerde and Ereira's works have been vital components to the research of this project because they are the most extensive resources from which to gain imperative information on both Ogilby and *America*.

For information on Bernard and Picart and their *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, a similar situation to that of Ogilby and his *America* is present in that little work on the authors and

¹⁴ Katherine S. Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times* (Folkestone, Kent: Wm Dawson & sons Ltd, Cannon House, 1976).

¹⁵ Alan Ereira, *The Nine Lives of John Ogilby: Britain's Master Mapmaker and His Secrets* (Britain: Duckworth Overlook, 2016).

the book itself has been published. Because *Religious Ceremonies of the World* was originally published in French, there have been a few translations published which also include short introductions.¹⁶ However, there have been only two comprehensive works published on the subject as a whole like that of Ogilby. The first of these two works, *The Book that Changed Europe: Picart and Bernard's Religious Ceremonies of the World*, written through the collaboration of Lynn Hunt, Margaret C. Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhardt, provides the most extensive insight into both the lives of the authors and the work itself.¹⁷ Having been published within the last ten years, this source not only offers updated research on the work of Bernard and Picart, but also supplies research that is relevant to the second perspective of this project in relation to the more current issue of cultural appropriation. Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt present their study of Bernard and Picart and their work through a framework that addresses Eurocentric tendencies. This presentation, then, allows the study to be understood through perspectives of other cultures not associated with Western tendencies, such as a mindset of Christian ideals.

The second of these two comprehensive works is *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion*, an edited volume that was also published under the collaborative efforts of Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt.¹⁸ In this volume, published in the same year as *The Book that Changed Europe*, the essays included address similar issues, but the work as a whole offers different perspectives on the subject from other scholars. As with researching information on Ogilby and *America*, these two works dedicated to Bernard and Picart's *Religious Ceremonies of*

¹⁶ The translation of which I reference in this research is *The ceremonies and religious customs of the various nations of the known world: together with historical annotations, and several curious discourses equally instructive and entertaining. Containing the Ceremonies of the Jews, and the Roman Catholicks. Written originally in French, and illustrated with a large Number of Folio Copper Plates, all beautifully Designed by Mr. Bernard Picart, And curiously Engraved by most of the Best Hands in Europe. Faithfully translated into English, by a gentleman, some Time since of St. John's College in Oxford* (London: Printed by William Jackson, for Claude du Bosc, Engraver at the Golden Head in Charles-Street, Covent Garden, 1734).

¹⁷ Lynn Hunt, Margaret C. Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhardt, *The Book That Changed Europe: Picart and Bernard's Religious Ceremonies of the World*, (Cambridge and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010).

¹⁸ Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhardt, eds. *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010).

the World have been of great importance. Though there are currently limited sources available, it should also be noted that this research, and publications addressing this particular topic, are becoming increasingly more prominent. This being the case, works dedicated to *Religious Ceremonies of the World* can be considered rather cutting edge and critical, even if they are not necessarily readily available.

As stated previously, a central focus of this study is an analysis of the relationship to the depiction of the Aztec peoples and their religious culture as represented by their own hands and the imaginative depictions developed by European illustrators. In this study, I have also relied on works that include images of Huitzilopochtli, one of the main Aztec deities, whom I have chosen to use as the primary religious figure for comparison. Elizabeth H. Boone's "Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural: The Image of Huitzilopochtli in Mexico and Europe" has provided insight into the presence and identity of this figure from both the indigenous and European perspective.¹⁹ Not only does Boone go into incredible detail concerning the visual attributes of Huitzilopochtli and offer a detailed account of the deity's role in Aztec culture, but she also explains how the deity's characteristics would have been perceived through the classical understanding of religion that was prominent in Western Europe. Boone's study then acts as a source from which I have been able to establish connections between European renditions of Huitzilopochtli and Western notions of demons, monsters, and devils.

Just as there are numerous references available in regards to Sahagún and the *Florentine Codex*, there are also a plethora of studies that address Aztec culture and pre-colonial, conquest-era Mexico. Two sources in particular that address these topics from which I gather information include Jon Manchip White's *Cortés and the Downfall of the Aztec Empire: A Study in a Conflict of Cultures* and David Carrasco and Scott Sessions's *Daily Life of the Aztecs: People of the Sun*

¹⁹ Elizabeth H. Boone, "Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural: The Image of Huitzilopochtli in Mexico and Europe," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 79, no. 2 (1989).

and Earth.²⁰ White's study looks exclusively at the interactions between the Aztecs and Spanish conquistadors through the framework of the conquest of Mexico. With this perspective, White addresses some of the most central aspects of the conquest, including its motivation and consequences, the monetary side of these motivations, and the many misconceptions that are often attached to the events.²¹ The perspective of motivation and misconception, then, coincides with my foundational questions concerning cultural appropriation.²² It is especially relevant considering its publication date of 1971, as this date is far from recent. Such a separation means a more apparent insight into stereotypical Western views on the events will be available for analysis, which is highlighted by the use of a Spanish perspective that limits any indigenous contribution.

Carrasco and Sessions's study looks closely at the everyday lives of the Aztec peoples. In the preface, Carrasco describes the book as "a journey through Aztec geography, cosmology, and society" while allowing the reader to "appreciate, understand, and make critical reflections" on all aspects of their lives.²³ With this work being a more recent publication, it offers a more cautious approach to understanding Aztec culture, limiting any potential for a display of stereotypical Eurocentric misconceptions. Both of these works provide critical insight into the everyday practices of the Aztecs and their transitions after the Spanish conquest. This insight allows for an examination of how the interactions of these two cultures, the Spanish and the Aztecs, established a platform from which European illustrators constructed their Eurocentric view of the Aztec peoples. It also displays how the Eurocentric views changed, or remained the same, over time.

²⁰ Jon Manchip White, *Cortés and the Downfall of the Aztec Empire: A Study in a Conflict of Cultures* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971); David Carrasco and Scott Sessions, *Daily Life of the Aztecs: People of the Sun and Earth* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2008).

²¹ White, *Cortés and the Downfall of the Aztec Empire*, 12-13, 80 and 98.

²² For more scholarship on the misconceptions of the Spanish conquest, I also consult Matthew Restall's work "Spanish Creation of the Conquest of Mexico," in *Invasion and Transformation: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico*, ed. by Rebecca P. Brien and Margaret Jackson, 93-102 (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2007).

²³ Carrasco and Sessions, *Daily Life of the Aztecs*, xii and xiv.

With regards to the status and importance of print culture, not only to this study, but to the research of print culture in general, Michael Gaudio's *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* is a significant reference.²⁴ In this work, Gaudio addresses the notion that "words cannot adequately describe the strangeness" of new worlds that are present in the literature of travel and that it is the visual image which can "capture the otherness" of these lands.²⁵ At the basis of his analysis, Gaudio deconstructs the illustrations found throughout the genre of travel accounts and atlases, specifically commenting on how the idea of the "savage" is maintained within them. To support his study, Gaudio also incorporates elements of the Western, Christian perspective and how this contributed to the distorted image of indigenous cultures of the Americas by European illustrators.

Other sources that trace the development of the distorted image of the Americas include Benjamin Schmidt's *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World*, Hugh Honour's *The New Golden Land: European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time*, and William C. Sturtevant's "First Visual Images of Native America."²⁶ Schmidt's work is a more recent publication that discusses the origins of European exoticism and their development in the second half of the seventeenth-century, specifically identifying and analyzing the style of presentation of the New World as it progressed into the eighteenth-century.²⁷ Honour and Sturtevant's works are foundational publications on the European depictions of indigenous Americans and the New World, providing comprehensive studies covering the narratives and illustrations that were produced in early travel literature.

²⁴ Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

²⁵ Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage*, xi.

²⁶ Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); Hugh Honour, *The New Golden Land: European Images of America from the Discoveries to the Present Time* (London: Allen Lane, 1976); William C. Sturtevant, "First Visual Images of Native America," in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, ed. by Fredi Chiappelli, Michael J. B. Allen, and Robert L. Benson, 417-454 (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1976).

²⁷ Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism*, 23.

Due to the increase in attention that the concept has received in the last few years, sources which address the processes and effects of cultural appropriation are readily available. As this thesis seeks to make an argument concerning the negative acts of appropriation of Latin American cultures in particular, many of the sources from which I have drawn information focus directly on the current perception of these cultures in the United States. These sources, which date between 1999 and 2010, include “Latinizing Culture: Art, Museums, and the Politics of U.S. Multicultural Encompassment,” “Exhibiting Identity: Latin America Between the Imaginary and the Real,” and “How Do We Know What Latin American Conceptualism Looks Like?”²⁸ A central focus shared by these articles is the representation of Latin American culture in art museums and the context of exhibition planning and presentation. This theme is significant to my study because I address how the process of cultural appropriation related to Latin American peoples is manifested through the limited options from which the public is able to engage with their art and culture in a museum setting. Because so few examples of Latin American artworks are given the opportunity for display, the ability for Eurocentric tendencies to overshadow their intended meanings remains a consistent problem.

As seen through this brief review of existing scholarship, research that addresses aspects of this project exists in abundant quantities. However, there are, to my knowledge, no sources that specifically make an argument for the negative acts of appropriation presently experienced by Latin American cultures within museums as related to the circulation of images that appear in early European publications covering the New World. It is for this reason that I have chosen to structure my research with the goal of forming connections between these two entities of European illustrations and the contemporary museum. Although there are many Latin American

²⁸ Arlene Dávila, “Latinizing Culture: Art, Museums, and the Politics of U. S. Multicultural Encompassment,” *Cultural Anthropology* 14, no. 2 (1999): 180-202; Fabiana Serviddio, “Exhibiting Identity: Latin America Between the Imaginary and the Real,” *Journal of Social History* 44, no. 2 (2010): 481-98; Miguel A. López and Josephine Watson, “How Do We Know What Latin American Conceptualism Looks Like?” *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, no. 23 (2010): 5-21.

cultural perspectives from which this study could derive, as stated before, I have selected to focus on the Aztec culture due to their prominent name as it is associated with the European conquests of Latin American civilizations. The misguided actions and knowledge involved with cultural appropriation are in serious need of discussion. To address the circumstances of this link, I seek, with this study, to provide an alternative perspective from which to examine the processes of cultural appropriation experienced within Latin American cultures that are witnessed in the presentation of their cultural history in modern-day museum exhibitions.

Methodological Approach

In this study, I implement four primary methodological frameworks. These frameworks include a historiographical approach, visual analysis, socio-cultural studies, and postcolonial studies. The historiographical component of this research focuses on the events that took place during the initial contact between the European explorers and Aztec peoples and the conquest that followed. Using this method, comparisons of the selected accounts will inform how their contents vary amongst the authors and illustrators. To compare and contrast the illustrated portions of the selected accounts, I will employ visual analysis. This approach will assist in identifying similarities and differences that are present in the European visual traditions of representing the Aztec peoples and their religious culture as opposed to those produced by indigenous hands. A comparison of this nature will allow for an in depth study into the characteristic elements applied from the European perspective of religion.

Socio-cultural studies will be applied to this project as a method by which to analyze and critique how the varied early European documentary sources have contributed to the misconceptions of Latin American culture with their extreme diversion from Sahagún's foundational text and imagery. Specifically, this approach will address the ways in which present-day practices used in many art museum exhibitions have perpetuated these misrepresentations. Finally, to form an integration of the three aforementioned methodologies, an overarching

position of a postcolonial perspective will be implemented to frame the research of this project. Study of this topic from a postcolonial position is imperative, as the outward relinquishing of these practices has created a complicated perspective from which to understand the intended meaning of indigenous culture.

Organization

I have broken down the research of this project in a modified chronological manner, beginning and ending with current perspectives. In the following chapter, I analyze the concept of cultural appropriation through the perspective of modern times by looking at the relationship between dominant Western powers and those of Latin America. Specifically, I address the relationship of the United States and Mexico to consider how acts of cultural appropriation are manifested between them. I offer a discussion on the misconceptions of culture that are present between the two, and use this as a platform from which to examine how traditional museum practices act as a hindrance to educating audiences on the topic of cultural history within Latin American communities when this is their main priority.²⁹ In order to evaluate these processes, I analyze a recent museum exhibition, and connect it with recent studies on the influence of cultural appropriation and how exhibitions of this nature may be perpetuating the continuation of this social issue.

Following the chronological order of sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, chapters three, four, and five are each dedicated to the three documentary sources of the *Florentine Codex*, *America*, and *Religious Ceremonies of the World*. In chapter three, I provide an introductory section on the initial interaction of the Spanish and Aztecs which highlights a typical description of the events, followed by a brief introduction of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún. The rest of the chapter is focused on an in depth study of the *Florentine Codex*, with sections that are

²⁹ This argument is not intended to include museums whose functions are more concerned with audience entertainment, such as those that are directed more toward younger audiences, and marketed as children's museums.

focused on the visual analysis of its illustrations depicting Huitzilopochtli, the indigenous, and the Spanish, with a conclusion that offers a discussion of this sixteenth-century document's influence.

A similar organizational approach is taken in chapter four, which is focused on Ogilby and *America* in the seventeenth-century, as well as chapter five, which is focused on Bernard and Picart's *Religious Ceremonies of the World*. In chapter four, I first provide an overview of the European religious culture of the time period, followed by introductory sections on Ogilby's life and the production of *America*. After these introductions, I again analyze images of Huitzilopochtli, the Spanish, and the Aztecs, ending the chapter with a discussion of how the misrepresentations in this seventeenth-century document reflect stereotypical Eurocentric tendencies. In chapter five, this same pattern is used, only altered through its introductory sections on Bernard and Picart and production of *Religious Ceremonies of the World*.

In the final chapter, the information that has been gathered through the research for chapters two through five will be used to provide a socio-cultural and postcolonial approach to the issues surrounding cultural appropriation. As mentioned previously, Eurocentric tendencies are prominent in art museum exhibitions practices. Latin American art and artists are often marginalized by these practices, and it is my argument that these practices may derive from early European representations of Latin American culture. I will also employ a case study format from which I address some of the ways that European institutions, and those of a more Western position, have profited from the exploitation of Latin American artistic forms and how Latin American individuals, and cultures as a whole, are working to correct this exploitation.

Because of the way that museum culture has developed, it seems to be a logical speculation that a connection is present between the processes of cultural appropriation and the heavily circulated and distorted images of Latin America that were produced by Western European cultures. As such, with this study, it is my intention to offer a new perspective on the

issue of cultural appropriation, both by addressing the issue as it stands and generating a discussion of potential ways in which the seemingly perpetual cycle can be altered. The reconfiguration of a misconstrued cultural perspective is a difficult task, but in order for a more correct understanding of misrepresented cultures to be made available, it is necessary to address the negative actions of the past.

CHAPTER II

INTERNAL CONFLICTS: REPRESENTATION IN THE MAINSTREAM MUSEUM

In recent years, the topic of cultural appropriation has witnessed an increase in discussion. This increase has occurred predominantly from the fact that the negative connotations associated with the concept are being addressed in a greater capacity than they have been in the past. Situations that were once seen as commonplace are now receiving much more aggressive attention from persons who identify as members of cultures that have been subject to the effects of cultural appropriation. From art, to dress, to music, cultural groups that are described as marginalized have consistently dealt with their traditions being adapted to fit a stereotypical construction by those of a more dominant status. The diversity that has evolved regarding such acts of cultural appropriation has led it to acquire multiple perspectives, with each relating to the different characteristics and application of the term. However, for the purpose of this research, the term will be understood as the instance when one culture adopts the cultural characteristics of another.³⁰

³⁰ YongGu Suh, JungYun Hur, and Gary Davies, “Cultural Appropriation and the Country of Origin Effect,” *Journal of Business Research* 69, no. 1 (2016): 2722. It should be noted that I intend for this definition to act only as a point of reference. As research progresses, it is assumed that this definition will not be the perfect fit to the situation being investigated and that certain circumstances will affect the accuracy of the “textbook” definition of the physical manifestation.

Whether or not one chooses to acknowledge the issue, it is a well-known fact that Western cultures have consistently viewed themselves as superior to others.³¹ The rise of Christianity as a dominant religion, in combination with old bureaucracies of the Graeco-Roman world, created what has been called the “perfect recipe for a repressive system” that eventually led to the labelling of societies as “barbarian.”³² A resulting consequence of this superior mindset has come to be defined as ethnocentrism, or the “judgment that one’s own culture is superior to others.”³³ The ethnocentric point of view held by Western cultures has long been understood as a driving force behind colonial establishments, and many of the actions taken during this era, such as the confiscation of indigenous objects for the purpose of display, clearly depict this view. It is from these notions of ethnocentrism that much of the modern day museum culture is founded. These foundations have resulted in museums contributing to the establishment and continuation of what Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Carl Grodach have described as “hierarchies of racial and cultural differences within their conceptions of a universal public.”³⁴ In the following sections, an analysis of these hierarchical and racialized relationships will be discussed with attention given to the current state of museum practices and the role they play in maintaining an ethnocentric perspective.

³¹ There are, of course, many other cultures that have viewed themselves as superior to others, as even the Aztecs viewed their culture as a more dominant power than its neighboring civilizations. However, because I am concerned with the relationship of Western European cultures and the Aztecs, I am giving attention to this mindset of Western Europeans specifically. From the perspective of travel writing, in particular, Mary Louise Pratt has approached this issue from which she discusses how peoples from regions that are separated both historically and geographically meet in what she calls the “contact zone.” Here, Pratt states, is where ongoing relationships are established, typically involving conditions related to “coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.” Her approach, here, offers a perspective from which to analyze how histories from dominant and marginalized cultures interact under circumstances of cultural imperialism. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6.

³² Deborah Root, *Cannibal Culture: Art, Appropriation, and the Commodification of Difference* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 155-156.

³³ Suh, Hur, and Davies, “Cultural Appropriation and the Country of Origin Effect,” 2722.

³⁴ Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Carl Grodach, “Displaying and Celebrating the ‘Other’: A Study of the Mission, Scope, and Roles of Ethnic Museums in Los Angeles,” *The Public Historian* 26, no. 4 (2004): 53.

The Current Relationship of Mexico and the United States

Actions informed by an ethnocentric mindset are visible in all instances of Western colonization. However, as this particular research is focused on the issue of Latin American misrepresentation, discussion will be limited to the viceregal history of Mexico. To establish this focus, it is necessary to address the current relationship that exists between Mexico and the United States. Though the United States was founded upon guiding principles of cultural diversity, the acceptance and respect of cultures less commonly associated with Western and Christian ideals has historically been limited, if even acknowledged at all. This lack of acknowledgement is especially concerning when one considers the fact that the two nations share a border and that much of the geographical United States was once Mexican territory. Furthermore, immigrants from Mexico make up one of the fastest growing populations in the United States. Despite these facts, what is even more alarming with this situation is that people in the United States have a “fascination with the exoticism of peoples south of the border,” yet the policies directed towards them tend to result in the undermining, exploitation, and discrimination of their culture.³⁵

With cultures grouped into the category of Latin American culture, and more specifically, Mexican culture, the appropriation of their art, dress, and music is an instance that is particularly visible in the United States.³⁶ Mexico as an individual nation, as well as the nations that make up greater Latin America, which includes twenty diverse economic and social compositions, are not inhabited by a single group of people, but rather a “broad mixture of races and several hundred ethnic groups.”³⁷ However, Mexico and other Latin American nations tend to be viewed as homogenous entities by more stereotypical Westernized cultures like the United States based on

³⁵ Mari Carmen Ramirez, “Beyond ‘the Fantastic’: Framing Identity in U.S. Exhibitions of Latin American Art,” *Art Journal* 51, no. 4 (1992): 60.

³⁶ The appropriation of these cultural characteristics does not always possess a negative connotation, as it is possible for the celebration of culture to be the intention. However, this research is concerned with the negative side of cultural appropriation experienced by Mexican cultures, such as insensitive costuming that makes fun of traditional dress.

³⁷ Ramirez, “Beyond ‘the Fantastic’,” 61.

characteristics such as the less obvious distinctions between peoples and cultures through skin color. Although Mexico is just as diverse as the United States, the United States is generally viewed as the more heterogeneous nation, simply based on the fact that its citizens display these distinctive visual characteristics in more prominent ways. This lack of acknowledgement of the diversity found within Mexico and greater Latin America causes one to question how a nation's culture is to be defined when other nations, such as the United States, are seen as "melting pots" for these exact qualities.

Mexico, like the United States, is a conglomerate of cultural backgrounds. Yet, because it is grouped into the category of "non-white" and viewed as a weaker political power, Mexico, like other predominantly Spanish speaking countries, has been affected by the "homogenizing bias of modernism" that has resulted in controversial terms such as "Hispanic" being used to represent extremely diverse cultures.³⁸ Established through these constructs, the representations of "Latin American" culture presented in historical settings often subjugate individual cultures to be displayed in such a way that their distinctive characteristics are generalized to suit this categorization. In the context of history or art focused museums, this situation is extremely visible. With extensive display and attention given to the subjects of Western European and/or Christian backgrounds, limited space is left over for the purpose of displaying topics associated with other cultures, including those grouped into Latin American categories.³⁹ This marginalized situation will further enhance my argument for the ways in which early European illustrations of Aztec culture have perpetuated the practices of cultural appropriation. Specifically, I will make an argument for the ways that museum practices have favored Western topics, leaving Latin American subjects to be misinterpreted, therefore cementing the effects of cultural appropriation.

³⁸ Ramirez, "Beyond 'the Fantastic'," 64.

³⁹ Ramirez, "Beyond 'the Fantastic'," 61-62.

Object Appropriation vs. Subject Appropriation

The basic perspective of cultural appropriation alone is a cause for concern, but what is often overlooked with this broad concept is that it actually includes a much denser inner framework. Though cultural appropriation in itself is expressed through a generic definition that can be applied to various instances when the act occurs, there are two major subcategories that can be extracted from it. These subcategories, object appropriation and subject appropriation, allow for an interpretation of the broader concept of cultural appropriation to take on a more direct focus. Although any act of cultural appropriation is important to address regardless of its origins, the more focused breakdown of object versus subject appropriation creates an opportunity for a better understanding of any individual act of appropriation when it occurs.

Typically viewed as the act of taking objects into possession “for use and exhibition in foreign contexts,” object appropriation is often understood in terms of ethics “within the framework of moral and legal property rights.”⁴⁰ With this view, authors Andrea N. Walsh and Dominic McIver Lopes state that object appropriation is often an instance of plain theft.⁴¹ These objects can be any material item that was once owned by a particular group or person that is now “owned” by another person or community.⁴² From this explanation, it is not difficult to make the connection between objects of various cultures that are now “owned” by museums for the purpose of display, which were likely acquired through many acts of conquest, warfare, and plunder.

The second subcategory of subject appropriation is not as easily represented in the tactile ways of object appropriation. As defined by James O. Young and Susan Haley, subject appropriation is enacted when members of one culture, “the outsiders,” represent members of

⁴⁰ Andrea N. Walsh and Dominic McIver Lopes, “Objects of Appropriation,” in *The Ethics of Cultural Appropriation*, ed. by James O. Young and Conrad G. Brunk (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009), 211.

⁴¹ Walsh and Lopez, “Object of Appropriations,” 225.

⁴² Walsh and Lopez, “Object of Appropriations,” 225.

other cultures, “the insiders,” or aspects of the insiders’ culture.⁴³ Young and Haley separate subject appropriation into two main contexts, those which occur in the arts and those which occur in social sciences.⁴⁴ In terms of the arts, subject appropriation can occur when artists represent a culture other than their own, including that culture’s people, and this can be present in any form of media.⁴⁵ Considering the nature of this project, both contexts of the arts and sciences are of importance. The arts context will be observed in later chapters in regards to the illustrative components of Sahagún, Ogilby, and Bernard and Picart while the social science component relates to the interpretive and interactive elements of museum exhibitions.

What is significant to all forms of cultural appropriation, whether they be through an object or subject related context, is that any instance can result in a culture being misrepresented. As expressed by Conrad G. Brunk and James O. Young, the misrepresentation and distortion of any cultural characteristics that are unique to a specific culture “with the consequence that this distortion becomes the widespread understanding in [a] dominant culture” can only be viewed as harmful to the people of that culture.⁴⁶ This product of harm may not necessarily be physical, but as Young and Haley state, the misrepresentation of a culture “can be profoundly offensive,” therefore acting as a form of psychological harm.⁴⁷

J. Paul Getty Museum: *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire* (2010)

There have been numerous exhibitions held within the last decade and before of which the focus was on the art, history, and culture of the Aztec civilization. However, in order to illustrate these exhibitions, I have selected a recent example because of the way it resonates with

⁴³ James O. Young and Susan Haley, “‘Nothing Comes from Nowhere’: Reflections on Cultural Appropriation as the Representation of Other Cultures,” in *The Ethics of Cultural Appropriation*, ed. by James O. Young and Conrad G. Brunk (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009), 268.

⁴⁴ Young and Haley, “‘Nothing Comes from Nowhere,’” 268.

⁴⁵ Young and Haley, “‘Nothing Comes from Nowhere,’” 268.

⁴⁶ Conrad G. Brunk and James O. Young, “‘The Skin off our Backs’: Appropriation of Religion,” in *The Ethics of Cultural Appropriation*, ed. by James O. Young and Conrad G. Brunk (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009), 97-98.

⁴⁷ Young and Haley, “‘Nothing Comes from Nowhere,’” 273.

the topic of this project. Specifically, this exhibition is of interest due to the fact that images from all three texts to be examined in the following chapters appear within it. Some limitations to providing the most accurate critiques of this exhibition are present and should therefore be addressed. The most important of these limitations to note rests with the fact that access to this exhibition in particular is no longer possible in its physical form. This absence then only allows for a critique to be made by way of the exhibition catalogue and the web-based sources that remain available for access. Consequently, this lack indeed hinders the ability to properly critique the exhibition's physical layout and opportunities for audience interaction. As such, it should be taken into consideration that the critiques and opinions of this particular exhibition provided in this study do not reflect the opinions of all individuals. The purpose remains an attempt to make connections between the interpretive practices of museums and the original documentary texts of which many of their informative qualities are manifested.

In 2010, the J. Paul Getty Museum held an exhibition titled *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*, which ran from March 24 to July 5. As expressed in the acknowledgements of the associated catalogue, the exhibition was formed through the “[realization] that from the moment of Europe’s first encounters with the Americas, the gods of the Old World were in a dialogue of sorts with those of the New World,” which “suggested intriguing comparisons” between Aztec religion and that of the ancient Mediterranean.⁴⁸ This interest in dialogue is also expressed as being one of the reasons why the understanding of Aztec civilization is complicated, deriving from the “European and Christian perspectives” that inform many of our current methods of interpretation.⁴⁹ Factors such as these are the foundational questions of this thesis. Therefore,

⁴⁸ Claire Lyons and John M. D. Pohl, acknowledgments to *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), x. Contributing institutions for this exhibition include, the Museo Nacional de Antropología in Mexico City, the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence, the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia in Mexico City, the Museo del Templo Mayor in Mexico City, the Banco Nacional de México, the Museo de Antropología e Historia del Estado de México, Toluca; the Museo Arqueológico de Apaxco; the Museo Regional de Puebla; and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, among many others.

⁴⁹ Lyons, and Pohl, acknowledgments to *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*, x.

after a thorough analysis of the three texts selected for this project, a more narrowed comparison will be available concerning their influence on the mainstream museum exhibition.

Referencing *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire's* exhibition catalogue, one aspect that is prominent in the approach of this exhibition is its dedication to incorporating research and analytical perspectives from the three disciplines of anthropology, art history, and classics.⁵⁰ The catalogue is divided into four sections, each of which is dedicated to information concerning "Origins and Growth of the Aztec Empire," "Conquistadors, Missionary Orders, and the Classical Heritage," "Parallel Pantheons," and "Art and Empire: From Roman Hispania to New Spain," respectively. Each section provides a thorough and concise introduction, followed by a set of selected images that depict some of the artifacts that comprise the exhibition, including illustrations from the works of Sahagún, Ogilby, and Bernard and Picart. These images include a list of Aztec deities from the *Florentine Codex*,⁵¹ Ogilby's depiction of Huitzilopochtli (fig. 3),⁵² and Bernard and Picart's depiction of Huitzilopochtli (fig. 4), which will receive further analysis in the following chapters.

In typical fashion, most of the selected images are accompanied by a short descriptive paragraph that identifies the iconography, artist, and other elements that are relevant to obtaining a basic understanding of each image's importance. If there is no description located in direct relation to the image, as is the case with the Bernard and Picart illustration (fig. 4), a simplified description is given within the main text of the chapter. For example, part of the text that is included with the Ogilby illustration is

⁵⁰ Lyons, and Pohl, acknowledgments to *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*, x.

⁵¹ The image that is pictured in the catalogue does not include the illustration of Huitzilopochtli that is also located in this particular series. However, it is safe to assume that this particular part of the illustration series was present in the exhibition because the *Florentine Codex* was included in its entirety and not as a set of individual sections.

⁵² It should be noted that the image that is included in the exhibition is actually credited to the Dutch publisher, Arnoldus Montanus, coming from his *De Nieuwe en onbekende weereld, of Beschryving van America en 't zuid-land* (The New and Unknown World, or Descriptions of America and the Southland). However, as will be discussed in chapter three, the images are in fact the same because Ogilby's *America* is based on Montanus's work, acting as a translation.

Like many illustrations of “heathen” civilizations, his depiction of the native religious beliefs indiscriminately mixes features of different cultures with sheer fantasy. This widely circulated engraving reconfigures the Aztec god Huitzilopochtli as an incarnation of Satan, but the iconography also incorporates aspects of pagan deities from classical mythology.⁵³

Likewise, the text associated with the Bernard and Picart illustration describes Huitzilopochtli’s image as

...[evincing] an incongruous fusion of classical Aztec iconography, evident as well in the depictions of the gods Tezcatlipoca and Tlaloc who are portrayed in the poses of enthroned Olympian gods... Within the chapel, Huitzilopochtli’s image is placed before a rich drapery in a lavish shrine, presiding from atop an orb on a tall pedestal ornamented with weapons like a Roman trophy. Here Picart was more faithful to historical accounts in adding a sculpted hummingbird (more dove-like in appearance) to the god’s headdress.⁵⁴

As stated previously, the captions or associated texts that are included do provide a basic explanation of what each image depicts. However, what is notable throughout the catalogue is that there is almost no inclusion of the pagan and Christian imagery that influenced the illustrations that were conducted solely by European hand. When they are included, they are not placed directly in line with the European illustrations, making an informative comparison difficult to visualize. By not including more examples of these images, the text creates a lack of opportunity for the viewers to understand how the European illustrations are misrepresentative.

Although these inclusions are indeed important and essential to providing a source of educational reference for a museum audience, a declaration made in the preface of the catalogue creates a sense of hesitation that coincides with the questions that structure the research of this project. In one of the forward texts, the author, Consuelo Sáizar, makes the statement that “reading history is an act of interpretation,” following with the claim that “specialists and visitors alike will enjoy the opportunity to formulate their own interpretations.”⁵⁵ This would seem to be a welcomed claim, as the act of interpreting an object or text from a culture different than one’s

⁵³ Text description of plate xviii in *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*, 50.

⁵⁴ Text description of plate xx in *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*, 36.

⁵⁵ Consuelo Sáizar, forward to *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), viii.

own would offer the freedom to engage with the object or text through an individual's personal perspective and speculation. However, this freedom brings into question the validity that is present in allowing one to make speculations on their own accord regarding such a complex historical framework. This should be especially concerning if those who are interpreting the exhibition do not already have thorough knowledge prior to addressing the culture at hand. Further creating cause for concern is the fact that the author of this text was a member and President of the former National Council for Culture and the Arts in Mexico, now known as the Secretariat of Culture. One would likely assume that a person of this status would seek to bring about a more centralized and precise interpretation of their cultural heritage, rather than welcoming the opportunity for interpretations that could completely undermine the importance of this culture.

The Problem of "Competing Memories"

What is most blatantly problematic about structuring an exhibition, like *The Aztec Pantheon*, under these circumstances derives not only from the possibility of misinterpretation by the curators, but the pre-existing notions of what Kevin Terraciano has termed the "competing memories of the conquest of Mexico."⁵⁶ Making references to a number of codices, including the *Florentine Codex*, Terraciano addresses the often extreme differences that are present in such accounts concerning the representation of Aztec culture. For example, Terraciano makes note of the fact that the

multiplicity of memories represented by [these] indigenous images and histories...defies the idea of a single 'Indian' view of the conquest and reflects the political and ethnic complexity of Mesoamerica before and after the arrival of Europeans and Africans.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Kevin Terraciano, "Competing Memories of the Conquest of Mexico," in *Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World*, ed. by Ilona Katzew, 55-78 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

⁵⁷ Terraciano, "Competing Memories of the Conquest of Mexico," 64.

Likewise, in terms of Spanish European histories, Terraciano acknowledges the censorship that was present with the publication and distribution of their accounts.⁵⁸ When the issue of competing memories is viewed from this perspective, the concept of presenting an exhibition, like *The Aztec Pantheon*, in a way that further complicates an already complex situation, is a choice that hinders the opportunity for a more accurate history to be recognized. As a result, approaches to exhibitions in this manner seem to be a direct link to the continuation of cultural appropriation, whether in subject or object form.

Because the museum is meant to be an educational institution, an attempt to create the most accurate representation of the culture being exhibited is crucial, and this need for accuracy is especially true when art is incorporated. This need is due to the often abstract nature and cultural influences of artworks produced by indigenous cultures, as well as those that are created by non-indigenous cultures with the intention of being representational and educational resources. As Fabiana Serviddio suggests, any place that exhibits art “affects the perception of an artwork” and directly speaks to those who select and support the display.⁵⁹ These results stand as the legitimization or discretization of the artifacts being exhibited, therefore producing the potential for the culture with which the artifacts are related to face the same conflict.⁶⁰ In the following chapters, the issues involved with the concept of competing memories, as related to cultural appropriation that consequently “[reinforce] the imaginary ideas of Latin America,” will be examined through the development and distribution of prominent early European accounts of this geographic region.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Terraciano, “Competing Memories of the Conquest of Mexico,” 64.

⁵⁹ Serviddio, “Exhibiting Identity,” 481.

⁶⁰ Serviddio, “Exhibiting Identity,” 481.

⁶¹ Serviddio, “Exhibiting Identity,” 488.

CHAPTER III

THE 16TH CENTURY: BERNARDINO DE SAHAGÚN AND THE *FLORENTINE CODEX*

It is difficult to picture a grade school history class in the United States without some form of Spanish exploration and the “discovery” of America being included. However, as is the case with many historical discussions, the details included are often incorrect. Whatever their manipulation may be, it can usually be assumed that the information provided is not completely accurate. It is that any account of history is likely to have errors, simply due to the discrepancies that arise through acts of translation and the misinterpretation or embellishment often experienced with the traditions of oral history. Although these are valid arguments, the fundamental problem with the teaching of history to young audiences seen in the United States regarding Latin American cultures, as well as other indigenous American cultures, is concerned with the fact that it is taught as truth. In order to more accurately portray the history of Latin American cultures, an effort to understand the variances and alterations of viewpoints is imperative.

To develop an understanding of this matter that is as accurate as possible, one must first acknowledge the most important distinguishing factor in Latin American history, which is the fact that the historical accounts available were recorded from different points of view. Because this

project is concerned with European representations of Aztec culture, it is necessary to discuss the most common retelling of the events that unfolded with the meeting of this indigenous culture and the Spanish explorers. As author Jon Manchip White has stated, most studies focusing on this historical event involve “books on *conquistadors* or Aztecs [that] are predominantly studies of one or the other, often dealing with the opposing side almost as an afterthought.”⁶² This limiting perspective is especially true when American history textbooks are of concern.⁶³ However, no matter what form of literature is presented to a potential reader, there are certain components to the retelling of this historical encounter that are never left unmentioned.

The Spanish Meet the Aztecs: Typical Descriptions of the Encounter

The typical retelling of the encounter between the Spanish and the Aztecs can be summed up in a manner of quick and to the point historical “facts” based on dates and documentary evidence recorded by members of the Spanish network. It is agreed that the Spanish explorers, led by Hernán Cortés, landed in what is now Mexico in April of 1519.⁶⁴ Likewise, it is also understood that the Spanish were in awe of what they encountered when they finally reached the Aztec capital city of Tenochtitlan. To illustrate this experience of wonder, written accounts are often invoked, such as one of the most quoted passages by Bernal Díaz del Castillo in which he states

...and when we saw so many cities and villages built in the water and other great towns on dry land and that straight and level Causeway going towards Mexico, we were amazed and said that it was like the enchantments they tell of in the legend of Amadis, on account of the great towers and cues and buildings rising from the water, and all built of masonry. And some of our soldiers even asked whether the things that we saw were not a dream...⁶⁵

⁶² White, *Cortés and the Downfall of the Aztec Empire*, 12.

⁶³ Susan K. Besse, “Placing Latin America in Modern World History Textbooks,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84, no. 3 (2004): 411-422.

⁶⁴ White, *Cortés and the Downfall of the Aztec Empire*, 159. It should be noted, however, that this expedition was not the first to occur by Spaniards in what is now Mexico. There was a smaller expedition that took place two years prior in 1517 by Spanish settlers in Cuba who had eventually made their way to what is the present-day Yucatan. (Carrasco and Sessions, *Daily Life of the Aztecs*, 213.)

⁶⁵ Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The History of the Conquest of New Spain*, ed. by David Carrasco (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 156. For reference, Tenochtitlan had approximately

Although this imagery is indeed a compelling testimony to these historical events, arguably the most common retelling involves the meeting between Cortés and the Aztec ruler Montezuma.⁶⁶ What is usually taught is that Montezuma believed Cortés to be the embodiment of the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl, leading Montezuma to shower the Spanish with gifts and treat them as royalty.⁶⁷ It is with this detail that many of the discrepancies regarding these events are found. As author David Carrasco has explained, there are two main perspectives that scholars debate concerning this particular issue. On one side of the argument, scholars view the Aztec prophecy regarding the return of this particular god as influencing Aztec policies toward the Spanish.⁶⁸ Scholars on this side of the argument, then, agree these actions allowed the Spanish to “gain a foothold in the capital, thus contributing to but not causing their military success.”⁶⁹ The opposing side to this debate includes scholars who argue that the story of Montezuma viewing Cortés as a god was concocted by Cortés as a way of portraying Montezuma as politically and spiritually weak.⁷⁰ From this perspective, they argue that Cortés strove to impress the king of Spain.⁷¹

Whatever side of this debate is actually correct, the outcome of the encounter between the Spanish and Aztec peoples posits the same ending, one which sees the European power successfully conquering the indigenous culture. It is because of this particular outcome, along with other similar cultural clashes, that the focus of this research is necessary as it falls into the pattern of European cultures viewing themselves as superior to those they saw as uncivilized, and

200,000 inhabitants which was only 100,000 less than the largest city in Europe at the time, Paris which had 300, 000. (Carrasco and Sessions, *Daily Life of the Aztecs*, 66).

⁶⁶ It should be noted, for clarity, that the emperor’s full name was Montezuma Xocoyotzin, which means “Montezuma the Younger.” The emperor Montezuma that encountered the Spanish during the conquest led by Cortes, Montezum Xocoyotzin, or Montezuma II, was not the only Aztec emperor who is referred to as Montezuma. (Carrasco and Session, *Daily Life of the Aztecs*, 210.)

⁶⁷ White, *Cortés and the Downfall of the Aztec Empire*, 199.

⁶⁸ Carrasco and Sessions, *Daily Life of the Aztecs*, 220.

⁶⁹ Carrasco and Sessions, *Daily Life of the Aztecs*, 220.

⁷⁰ Carrasco and Sessions, *Daily Life of the Aztecs*, 220.

⁷¹ Carrasco and Sessions, *Daily Life of the Aztecs*, 220.

using this as the justification for their actions. What should be noted in this matter, as White states, is that

The contest between the Spaniards and the Aztecs was not to be an unequal struggle between an arrogant and aggressive culture on the one hand and a mild and pacific one on the other. It was to be a clash between two cultures that could both be described as advanced and self-assertive; both had reached a point in their development where they were accustomed to carrying all before them.⁷²

As can be inferred from White, as well as many other historians such as Carrasco, the Aztec civilization was certainly capable of engaging in successful combat. However, the involvement of a powerful, European opponent subjected the Aztec point-of-view to being perpetually misinformed and overshadowed by the documentation offered by the Spanish. In short, these circumstances display the common trope of “winners” writing the histories that receive the most attention from future readers.

Fray Bernardino de Sahagún: A Brief Introduction

It may be well-known that the Spanish successfully conquered the Aztecs, the event that placed the control of part of what is now Mexico under Spanish control, but the extent to which this event is further discussed typically ends here. Occasionally, and depending on a student or scholar’s particular area of research, other details regarding the religious motivations of the Spanish to convert the indigenous to Catholicism might be discussed. However, one area of concern that has only relatively recently gained attention is how the Spanish recorded their history in conjunction with their colonizing efforts. The sixteenth-century marks one of the most influential eras for this practice in which one of the first ethnographic studies took place. With the production of the *Florentine Codex* under the direction of Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, the first “true” attempt at documenting the Aztec culture was created.

⁷² White *Cortés and the Downfall of the Aztec Empire*, 83.

Born in 1499 in Sahagún de Campos, Leon, Spain, Fray Bernardino de Sahagún has been regarded by many as a “sixteenth-century pioneer in the field of anthropology.”⁷³ In 1529, only eight years after the Aztecs had been defeated by Cortés and his followers, Sahagún arrived in New Spain as part of an expedition, personally tasked with learning the native language.⁷⁴ Like other missionaries, Sahagún’s intentions were first and foremost to convert the indigenous peoples to the Christian religion. However, unlike other missionaries, Sahagún is said to have not been “moved to seek Crown favor or advance his own personal interests,” nor did his intentions involved the assimilation of the indigenous.⁷⁵ Because of his intentions, and ability to stay focused on them, Sahagún fixed his attention on compiling an objective study of indigenous culture.⁷⁶

Almost thirty years after his initial arrival in New Spain, Sahagún was officially commissioned to perform his investigation of Aztec culture by the head of his Franciscan order.⁷⁷ Enlisting the aid of native informants, Sahagún began compiling data on all aspects of Aztec culture, from religious beliefs, to social, moral, and political practices.⁷⁸ With this information, Sahagún sought to produce a credible source of the Aztec past and present that would

highlight the positive aspects of the cultures, thereby protecting the natives from unwarranted charges of incompetence or cultural inferiority, while justifying his and his colleagues’ own extensive concern for their well-being.⁷⁹

In order to successfully and accurately portray these aspects of Aztec culture, Sahagún’s partnership with some of his “most accomplished” students enabled him to accrue interviews from Aztec nobles over the course of two years.⁸⁰ From these interviews, Sahagún’s indigenous assistants helped to create his first substantial work, the *Primeros Memoriales*, which was

⁷³ John M.D. Pohl, Claire Lyons, and J. Paul Getty Museum, *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2010), 15.

⁷⁴ Bremer, “Sahagún and the Imagination of Inter-religious Dialogues,” 14.

⁷⁵ Keber, “Sahagún and Hermeneutics: A Christian Ethnographer’s Understanding of Aztec Culture,” 53.

⁷⁶ Klor de Alva, “Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography,” 37.

⁷⁷ Pohl, Lyons, and J. Paul Getty Museum, *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*, 17.

⁷⁸ Klor de Alva, “Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography,” 34.

⁷⁹ Klor de Alva, “Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography,” 39.

⁸⁰ Pohl, Lyons, and J. Paul Getty Museum, *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*, 17.

eventually modified and used to form his most significant contribution, the *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España*, known most commonly as the *Florentine Codex*.⁸¹

The Florentine Codex: Its Purpose and Production

Due to its prominence as a unique and authoritative source, the *Florentine Codex* is one of, if not the most studied historical document of its kind. The *Florentine Codex* is, as described by scholar Elizabeth Boone, “an organized compendium of cultural information conceived in the tradition of the medieval encyclopedia.”⁸² Constructed as a twelve-volume source, Sahagún and his indigenous associates documented the people and culture of Central Mexico, namely the Aztecs, at the time of the Spanish conquest.⁸³ As an official source, the text and illustrations that comprise the *Florentine Codex* seek to promote the most accurate depiction of this culture as possible.

In order to perform this action, Sahagún implemented ethnographic techniques including “highly ordered, directed questioning using, at times, fixed questionnaires” that were developed with the intention of pulling the most information possible from “carefully chosen informants.”⁸⁴ Using this system, Sahagún was able to construct not only an accurate depiction of the Aztecs and their culture, but also an informative account of their interactions with the Spanish, one of the most varied perspectives of this historical event. To execute this goal, Sahagún implemented two approaches from which to address any obvious contradictions. These contradictions, of course, are those that existed between the moral and historical claims of Christianity and the need for Aztec culture to be unaltered by the influence of Christian customs.⁸⁵

The first approach that Sahagún took with forming the *Florentine Codex* was to limit the interactions between the Christian conversion process that was practiced by so many Spanish

⁸¹ Klor de Alva, “Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography,” 34.

⁸² Boone, “Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural,” 32.

⁸³ Magaloni Kerpel, “Visualizing the Nahua/Christian Dialogue,” 194.

⁸⁴ Klor de Alva, “Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography,” 42.

⁸⁵ Klor de Alva, “Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography,” 43.

religious figures and his own ethnographic project.⁸⁶ Such a distinction would then create a much less biased interpretation of the interactions between the Spanish and indigenous. In his second approach, Sahagún sought to “separate description from interpretation.”⁸⁷ Although this intention was not possible to fully achieve, it is an imperative representation of Sahagún’s attempts at correcting the problem of European and/or Christian interpretations distorting the history of Aztec culture.⁸⁸ In order to properly adapt his experimental procedures, it is clear that Sahagún performed his processes in multiple stages. As suggested by Eloise Quiñones-Keber, Sahagún did not gather a single source of data or images, nor did he produce one final copy.⁸⁹ Instead, the *Florentine Codex* exists as a “repeatedly amplified and revised” set of material that eventually evolved into “an extant final product.”⁹⁰

Although the text of the *Florentine Codex* is of much importance because it acts as an interpreter, the most prominent component to this work is the inclusion of its pictorial elements. These illustrations, executed between 1578 and 1579, “function as concise, abbreviated text that is parallel to the more extensive written texts in Spanish and Nahuatl” languages.⁹¹ The production of these illustrations, like the other efforts of the work, were developed with the aid of indigenous assistants and, in total, the *Florentine Codex* contains approximately 1,850 of these images.⁹² The indigenous hands involved with this production clearly incorporated their own traditional pictography, as can be seen in the characteristically pre-Columbian style. However, it is also apparent that, even though they were asked to depict their own traditions, these indigenous illustrators had come under the influence of European customs, therefore causing their illustrations to adopt certain European styles and forms.⁹³ With this influence in mind, an analysis

⁸⁶ Klor de Alva, “Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography,” 43.

⁸⁷ Klor de Alva, “Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography,” 43.

⁸⁸ Klor de Alva, “Sahagún and the Birth of Modern Ethnography,” 43.

⁸⁹ Quiñones Keber, “Reading Images,” 203.

⁹⁰ Quiñones Keber, “Reading Images,” 203.

⁹¹ Baird, “Sahagún and the Representation of History,” 117.

⁹² Baird, “Sahagún and the Representation of History,” 120.

⁹³ Boone, “The Multilingual Bivisual World of Sahagún’s Mexico,” 144.

of these images should be taken with caution, as should be taken with any document of this nature. But, because they still retain the direct connection to indigenous hands, they may be taken as one of, if not the most accurate representation of official Aztec cultural documentation.

Huitzilopochtli, Commoners, and Royalty in the *Florentine Codex*

Along with the story of Cortés and his meeting with Montezuma, the visual imagery that is commonly associated with indigenous American cultures often portrays their religious system. In the *Florentine Codex*, a focus on this imagery is no exception, as the text and associated illustrations includes a detailed explanation of the religious system of the Aztecs. Because of his prominence and status within this religious system, the first set of images within the *Florentine Codex* to be analyzed in terms of the more traditional pictorial style, and influenced by indigenous hand, will be illustrations of the god Huitzilopochtli. In the following chapters, these illustrations will be used to analyze how the more traditional indigenous representation of the deity was reconfigured in later European accounts of Aztec culture.

During the sixteenth-century, and at the time of the conquest, Huitzilopochtli was the most celebrated Aztec deity.⁹⁴ The god of the sun and the god of war, Huitzilopochtli is said to have been the “[embodiment] of the feats and aspirations of the Aztec-Mexica people themselves.”⁹⁵ Although he possessed such a role within their culture, there are few visual examples of the deity that exist. Out of all Aztec sculpture, there are only five identifiable representations of the deity, and his image is limited in illustrated form as well.⁹⁶ For this analysis, I have selected three illustrations of the deity from the *Florentine Codex* to examine. The first image will be a depiction of the god’s origin, the second will be one of the most well-known representations of the deity in his ideal form, and the third is an illustration of the deity in association with the religious customs of the Aztec peoples.

⁹⁴ Boone, “Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural,” 1.

⁹⁵ Boone, “Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural,” 1.

⁹⁶ Boone, “Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural,” 3.

As is the case with many religious traditions, the origin story of Huitzilopochtli is an important aspect of the god's position of religious authority. In the first chapter of the *Florentine Codex's* third book, a detailed description of the god's origin is given, along with a graphic illustration (fig. 5). In this rendition of the event, there are pictured two human-like figures in a seemingly hierarchical diagonal. The figure to the left is smaller in form, lying on its back, appears to have stereotypically masculine features, is fully clothed, and holds staff-like objects in each of its hands with a round object next to his right leg. The second figure, to the right of the image, is in an upright, seated position with arms outstretched over the figure lying on its back, and appears to have more stereotypically feminine features. The larger seated figure is less elaborately adorned with clothing and other objects, but what sets this figure apart is the intertwined mass of what can only be assumed to be snakes that sit covering her lap.

From the text describing the image, the reader learns the full origin story of the god, and that this image is a depiction of Huitzilopochtli's birth from his mother, the goddess Coatlicue.⁹⁷ As Sahagún writes, Coatlicue conceived a child from a pile of feathers that she placed around her waist, gathered from the location where she performed penances.⁹⁸ That Coatlicue conceived was seen as a disgrace by the other gods, and they planned to kill her.⁹⁹ Even though he had not yet been born, Huitzilopochtli was aware of the situation at hand and was able to communicate with one of the other gods.¹⁰⁰ In the accompanying text, it is stated that at the moment when the attack on his mother had begun,

[Huitzilopochtli] just then [had been] born (fig. 5). Then he had his array with him—his shield, *teueuelli*; and his darts and his blue dart thrower, called *xiuatlatl*; and in diagonal stripes was his face painted with his child's offal, called his child's face painting. He was pasted with feathers at his forehead and at his

⁹⁷ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 3, 1-5. Coatlicue is known as “She of the Serpent Skirt,” which addresses the illustration of the snakes covering her lap in the image.

⁹⁸ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 3, 2.

⁹⁹ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 3, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 3, 2-5.

ears. And on his one thin foot, his left, he had the sole pasted with feathers. And he had stripes in blue mineral earth on both his thighs and both his upper arms.¹⁰¹

As such, Sahagún's words and the illustration produced by the indigenous assistants is quite an accurate combination. The attention to detail with both provides the observer with an intimate look into Aztec religious history.

The second image I have chosen for this analysis is likely the most well-known and recognizable representation of Huitzilopochtli included in the *Florentine Codex* (fig. 6). Located in the first chapter of book one, this illustration depicts a relatively minimalistic interpretation of the deity, but it is from this particular depiction that much of his iconographic detail is identified. Beginning with his headdress, long, green quetzal feathers can be seen atop the yellow and red stripes that extend from his chin to the top of his head.¹⁰² He holds in his right hand a serpent staff, and in his left, a shield with eagle feathers.¹⁰³ Blue-striped paint covers the lower-half of his body extending from a central red sash leading to sandals that have red straps. The final, and perhaps most important iconographic detail, is the hummingbird head that is worn on his back. This is the only element found solely on Huitzilopochtli, and though not always present when his form is created, it specifies the god when it is present, as hummingbird, or "*huitzilin*" in Nahuatl, is the main phonetic element to the god's name.¹⁰⁴ From this illustration, the image of his birth (fig. 5) is validated, as the details of his dress are evaluated from a more in depth description.

In the third image depicting Huitzilopochtli, we see the god worshipped by common Aztec peoples (fig. 7). The text which describes this illustration states that,

This one [Huitzilopochtli and his association with bad omen] the Mexicans respected. Hence they made offerings to him; hence they honored him, they

¹⁰¹ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 3, 4.

¹⁰² H.B. Nicholson, "The Iconography of the Deity Representations in Fray Bernardino de Sahagún's *Primeros Memoriales*: Huitzilopochtli and Chalchiuhtlicue," in *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth-Century Aztec Mexico*, ed. by J. Jorge Klor de Alva, H.B. Nicholson, and Eloise Quiñones Keber (Albany and Austin: Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, University at Albany, State University of New York; Distributed by University of Texas Press, 1988), 232.

¹⁰³ Boone, "Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural," 8.

¹⁰⁴ Boone, "Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural," 8.

exerted themselves for him and they placed their trust in [Huitzilopochtli]. And this veneration was taken from there, Coatepec [the city], as was done in days of yore.¹⁰⁵

In this illustration, the traditional image of Huitzilopochtli is again depicted, but with minor differences shown through variations of coloring, as can be seen most notably with his sandals. It is an important image, however, because it is a representation of the admiration and respect that the Aztecs had for the god.

What is most important to note about these three representations of the god is that underneath all of his adornments, the basic structure of the god is mostly human in form. He has two legs, two feet, two arms, and two hands. There is nothing that can necessarily be characterized as demon or monster-like because the adornments that he wears are, in their simplest form, a costume. Aside from these adornments, the fabric and shoes that cover his body certainly resemble what many would have recognized as garments that any typical indigenous person of the sixteenth-century might wear. However, these details are instances where more attention to the illustration of the god must be given because they are factors that can certainly be interpreted as visual indicators of the European influence exhibited by the indigenous illustrators. As there are only a limited number of physical representations of Huitzilopochtli available, it is difficult to know whether or not these illustrations of the god in the *Florentine Codex* are what were actually formed solely in the minds of the indigenous assistants.

The next set of images that will be used for further analysis include depictions of the Aztec peoples, both commoners and royalty. In the first image, which depicts the common peoples of Tenochtitlan leaving supplies for the Spanish, located in chapter eighteen of book twelve, we see three indigenous peoples dressed in sleeved tunics with what appears to be loin cloth-like garments extending downward (fig. 8). Unlike the depiction of indigenous peoples that one might typically envision, the indigenous peoples represented in this image do not appear to be

¹⁰⁵ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 3, 5.

the embodiment of the characteristic “savage,” or “uncivilized” persons often associated with the New World. Specifically, there are no weapons included within this particular image, nor do we see any markings on their bodies because they are clothed and not naked, two tropes that are often included in illustrations of indigenous peoples.

The most striking aspect of this image is observed in its accompanying text in which Sahagún writes that what is pictured is actually a description of fear. As it is written, Sahagún describes the image with the words

But the Mexicans dared not all go there. They were in great terror; they could not control themselves for fear; they were astounded. Fear prevailed; fear was widespread. No one dared do anything. It was as if a fierce beast were there; it was as the deep of the night. Yet not because of this did they stop; not for this was there hesitation in leaving what [the Spaniards] required, but they left it in fear. They went only in great fear, they only ran in fear as they left it. And when they came to scatter it over the ground, there running back; they shot back. There was panting, there was trembling.¹⁰⁶

From just this image (fig. 8), it would not be apparent that there is such fear residing with the indigenous peoples depicted. To clarify, the indigenous peoples were not simply taking supplies to the Spanish on their own accord, but were being ordered to do so by Doña Marina, the indigenous guide who had been captured by the Spanish to act as their interpreter.¹⁰⁷ Knowing this information presents a different picture of the Aztecs from the one typically described by European accounts, which highlights only the savage practices and beliefs connected to indigenous peoples. This illustration and text show the more vulnerable side of the Aztec peoples, and that even with their military power they, too, had emotions of fear and anxiety expressed towards the Spanish.

In the next image of this set, we see a depiction of the Aztec emperor, Montezuma, whose body has been tossed into a river by Spanish men after his defeat (fig. 9).¹⁰⁸ The emperor

¹⁰⁶ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 12, 50.

¹⁰⁷ Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, Book 12, 49.

¹⁰⁸ Magaloni Kerpel and Medina, *Colors of the New World*, 40. This description has been simplified. To clarify, Montezuma is already in the water, and it is Itzcuahtzin, the fuller of Tenochtitlan’s sister city,

is adorned with a long loin-cloth, a cap, and a crown-like headpiece. He is shoeless and appears not to be wearing any sort of jewelry, although constant references are made to the gifts of this nature that he presented to Cortés and the Spanish upon their arrival to his city. This image was extremely influential, however, because this style of dress can be seen in later depictions of the emperor, notably with one of the most recognized portraits of the emperor, attributed to the artist Antonio Rodríguez from the seventeenth-century (fig. 10). Although the portrait by Rodríguez does include depictions of bejeweled adornments, the same characteristic style of the textiles and headpiece can be seen.¹⁰⁹

In figure nine, there are also representations of the Spanish displayed. This is a stereotypical costume type, or image of Spanish European men's dress, complete with elaborate hat, ruffled blouse, and cropped pants with tights underneath. In a second image (fig. 11), we see another common representation of Spanish European men, only this time see them depicted in a pre-combat, marching formation. The important features to note with figures eight through eleven, concerning the representations of the indigenous and the Spanish, is just how different these depictions are from the typical image of the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire. That fear is depicted not with the Spanish, but with the indigenous, is a significant point of interest with the images that fill the *Florentine Codex* and offers an insider's perspective of the culture.

Subtle Influences, Lasting Impressions

As it has been stated previously, a very limited number of official visual representations of Huitzilopochtli were available. In this case, it can be argued that because the indigenous illustrators of the *Florentine Codex* lacked a truly recognizable model, they were "free to assemble their own iconographic program for the Aztec god for their continental public."¹¹⁰

Tlatelolco, who is still in the hands of the Spanish. The coloring, too, is important to note, as Magaloni Kerpel describes that the dark and gloomy coloring surrounding Montezuma represents his defeat, while the more vibrant coloring that surrounds the Spaniards above represents their victorious status.

¹⁰⁹ See chapter 7, "The Exotic South," in Honour's *The New Golden Land*.

¹¹⁰ Boone, "Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural," 3.

However, it is difficult not to take note of the fact that Christianizing efforts had been underway long before these artists would have been developing their illustrations for this text. As a result of this influence, the artists may have created more muted interpretations of Aztec deities that reflected a more classical interpretation as derived from Christian teachings.¹¹¹ Likewise, even though Sahagún was adamant that his intentions were to convert the indigenous, but not to assimilate them, he was not the only Christian figure present during the time in which his documentary efforts took place. Other Christian leaders were present who were certainly intent on transforming every aspect of indigenous culture, meaning they would have expected them to adopt a more European style of dress to showcase the civilizing process. These influences can be seen in the representations of indigenous peoples found in the *Florentine Codex*. However, despite these influences, it should not be forgotten that, at their core, the images produced are still derived from a predominately indigenous point of view.

Although it cannot be determined for certain whether or not it was Sahagún's intention, the circumstances surrounding the production of the *Florentine Codex* suggest that these Europeanized influences may have indeed been employed for a specific purpose. The "Europeanizations" that are present within these illustrations "reflect the necessity of the times to put the illustrative material in a form that would be more comprehensible, more accessible, and more convincing" to those for whom the manuscript was intended.¹¹² With the age of colonization at its height, it makes sense to believe that a subtle, yet purposeful European manipulation of indigenous imagery had been implemented.¹¹³ The production of the *Florentine Codex* took place approximately fifty years after the initial conquest. By that time, many of the traditional

¹¹¹ Baird, "Sahagún and the Representation of History," 134.

¹¹² Baird, "Sahagún and the Representation of History," 134.

¹¹³ One of the most notable instances of this subtle manipulation can be seen in the labelling used in Sahagún's list of deities that includes an illustration of Huitzilopochtli (fig. 6). In this illustration, "Vitzilubuchtlí" is placed opposite the words "otro hercules," which translates to "other Hercules," clearly referencing the Roman mythological figure. By including this reference, Sahagún has already set a precedent for framing Aztec religion in a way that could be understood by a Western European audience, even if his intentions were to remain loyal to indigenous religious traditions.

components of Aztec culture had already been replaced completely, and the intermixing of the two cultures was already underway. In the following chapter, the extent to which this phenomenon of European influence occurred will be examined, with an attempt to analyze how the different stylistic components incorporated into later illustrations of the Aztec peoples developed within different time periods, regions, and cultures.

CHAPTER IV

THE 17TH CENTURY: JOHN OGILBY AND *AMERICA*

Moving forward in time from the era of Sahagún's missionizing movement to the seventeenth-century, there were many changes emerging within Western European cultures, especially within the areas of education and religious beliefs. Where there had once been semi-stable divisions of religious practices, the mid-seventeenth-century faced what historians have labeled a "general crisis."¹¹⁴ Rather than living under the direction of these stable divisions of religious and political authorities, people of this era "experienced the world in a state of chaotic flux" as an increased sense of doubt began replacing old confidences and revolutionary tactics.¹¹⁵ Religion, of course, remained a major source of influence on people's lives as a large majority of Western European citizens identified as members of Catholic or Protestant communities, but its dominant status within education had begun to dwindle. Educational practices in the seventeenth-century were still heavily centered on the Bible and Classics, because this is how the art and skills involved with translation were taught.¹¹⁶ However, because access to education had begun to spread to a wider audience by this time, depending on one's location and societal affiliation, this

¹¹⁴ Ereira, *The Nine Lives of John Ogilby*, 4.

¹¹⁵ Ereira, *The Nine Lives of John Ogilby*, 4.

¹¹⁶ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 26.

focus on the use of religious and classical texts had become increasingly less prominent.¹¹⁷

Although it was still present, the lessened emphasis on religious teaching experienced in the latter part of the seventeenth-century is due in large part to the rise of the Enlightenment era that so intensely reconfigured ways of thought in Western Europe. A civilization that had once been “rooted in the religious thought of monastic learning” was now concentrated on new forms of scientific study that chose actions of measurement and experiment over older practices that were grounded in trusting one’s senses.¹¹⁸ These new foundations of science were also a part of the transformation in educational practices and their drift from religious backgrounds and, indeed, they manipulated the ways people thought of and hypothesized about the unknown areas of the world. However, as with any tradition, the process of ridding one’s mind of past beliefs and teachings is a long and difficult one, meaning they are still destined to remain a significant part of any specific culture. Even if the way these past understandings of uncertainties are presented is not necessarily intended to be an accurate representation, they still retain a powerful hold over the minds of the individuals that are absorbing the information they possess.

By the early seventeenth-century, approximately twenty years after Sahagún and his indigenous assistants had completed the *Florentine Codex*, the intrigue and desire for more information on the New World was at its height. Explorations to the New World, especially those led by the Spanish and Portuguese, and the subsequent publications, had infiltrated Europe with fantastic stories and rumors about the objects and people who inhabited these lands.¹¹⁹ These new sources of information, however true or false they may have been, increased the demand for access to knowledge of the New World in the form of travel narratives and atlas publications.¹²⁰ This increase in travel literature is what constitutes the topic of this chapter and the following.

¹¹⁷ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 26.

¹¹⁸ Ereira, *The Nine Lives of John Ogilby*, xiv.

¹¹⁹ Carrasco and Sessions, *Daily Life of the Aztecs*, 234.

¹²⁰ Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism*, 3-6.

Within these two chapters, two prominent and highly influential works of travel literature will be analyzed, discussing how interpretations of the Aztec civilization were manipulated by Western European sources.

John Ogilby (1600-1676): A Man of Many Talents and Professions

Despite being the author, translator, and publisher of one of the seventeenth-century's most successful publications of travel literature, very little is known about the life of John Ogilby. However, what is known of his life proves that he was a man of many talents who used them to guide his choice of professions and his eventual success. Ogilby's most notable profession was, without question, his work as an author, printer, and publisher.¹²¹ Yet, the lesser known aspects of his many careers, including cosmographer, dancer, theatrical impresario, and translator, display his range as a rather resourceful entrepreneur.¹²² From his humble beginnings to his rise of fame in the literary world, Ogilby is a steadfast example of the impact one man can make on the translation and presentation of new sources of knowledge to the greater public.

Born in Scotland in November of 1600, John Ogilby was raised in poverty.¹²³ In terms of his religious upbringing, it appears that he was most likely born into a Presbyterian family, an association he is assumed to have dismissed in his adult years.¹²⁴ Aside from this, not much else of Ogilby's life is known or well-documented, except that he was married late in life at the age of 50 to a wealthy widow who is thought to have been one of his most important professional connections.¹²⁵ This connection was apparently the boost his career needed, as his first point of notoriety was his involvement as a dancer when he was a child which, as scholar Katherine Van

¹²¹ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 79. (According to his personal biographer, this is the date recorded of his birth, but it is not known for certain.)

¹²² Ereira, *The Nine Lives of John Ogilby*, xii.

¹²³ Ereira, *The Nine Lives of John Ogilby*, xii and Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 11.

¹²⁴ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 11. (Van Eerde states that he appears to have enjoyed making fun of sectaries, as can be shown in the way he treats them in his section on New England in his work *America*.)

¹²⁵ Gordon C. Dickinson, "Britain's First Road Maps: The Strip-Maps of John Ogilby's Britannia, 1675," *Landscapes* 4, no. 1 (2003): 80.

Eerde states, was “hardly a recommendation for social advancement.”¹²⁶ Ogilby’s sole profession as a dancer eventually came to an end in 1650, but it was with this end that the most successful aspect of his many careers began. Turning towards a profession of translating the Classics, including Virgil, Homer, and Aesop, Ogilby had officially taken his first step in entering the world of travel literature.¹²⁷

Plagiarism Meets Success: The Production of Ogilby’s *America*

Although he is arguably most famous for being, as stated by author Alan Ereira, the “man who quite literally put the new Britain on the map,” with his atlas of Great Britain titled *Britannia*, Ogilby was in fact the publisher of a series of volumes originally promoted as a project under the general title *An English Atlas*.¹²⁸ In the early months of 1669, Ogilby issued a proposal for five separate volumes with the subjects of Africa, America, Asia, Europe, and, of course, Great Britain.¹²⁹ As it was announced in the preface to the first volume on Africa, Ogilby’s intention “was to cover the entire world, not with ‘atlases’ in the modern sense, but rather with available and up-to-date translations of various accounts.”¹³⁰ These accounts, as stated by Van Eerde,

emphasized the travels of various figures (generally ambassadors or Catholic missionaries), strange customs and outlandish wonders, and even some haphazard geography of the relatively unknown regions of the world...¹³¹ The content of these works were not, of course, the choice of Ogilby. They reflect, rather, the special seventeenth-century interests in strange lands: concern about fantastic religious practices, sexual deviation, cruelty, marital customs, [and] unusual costumes.¹³²

All five of these publications represent monumental influences on the world of travel literature, but it is with the second of these five atlases, *America*, where the focus of this section lies.

¹²⁶ Ereira, *The Nine Lives of John Ogilby*, xii and Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 11.

¹²⁷ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times* 12.

¹²⁸ Ereira, *The Nine Lives of John Ogilby*, xii and 187.

¹²⁹ Ereira, *The Nine Lives of John Ogilby*, xii and 187.

¹³⁰ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 95.

¹³¹ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 95.

¹³² Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 96-97.

Ogilby moved through the publication process of his atlas series at an extraordinary speed as the time between each publication being released was short. This speed, however, was of considerable importance, when one recognizes that he was already nearing his seventies by the time of their proposal. Ogilby, having started his endeavor with the publication of *Africa* in 1669, advertised in late November of 1670 that *America* was in production and almost exactly one year later, in November of 1671, he announced that the second installment of his series was in print and available for purchase.¹³³ In general, Ogilby's emphasis on illustration was "unusually lavish for his time," but, out of all his volumes, *America* was the most meticulous and detailed "as far as content, style, and organization are concerned."¹³⁴ For *America*'s illustrations, Ogilby employed expert artists and engravers, although this component, along with the text itself, demonstrates one of the biggest controversies surrounding the publication.¹³⁵

Because the specific volume of *America* is the focus of this section, it is imperative to acknowledge Ogilby's sources. Modern copyright laws did not yet exist in literature and publishing, but there were some laws in place under the umbrella of copyright protection during the decade in which Ogilby was working.¹³⁶ Though these copyright laws existed, it is clear that Ogilby had no qualms about plagiarizing the works of other well-known and respected authors of travel literature.¹³⁷ If one were to look intently at the previous works published on travel, they would learn that all of the volumes in his series are direct translations from two Dutch authors, Arnoldus Montanus, from whom he gathered information for his works on Asia, specifically

¹³³ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 107.

¹³⁴ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 12 and 107.

¹³⁵ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 12.

¹³⁶ As stated by author Adrian Johns in his 2009 book, *Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), the modern doctrines of patent and copyright can be traced back to Britain in the seventeenth-century, when printers and booksellers "asserted an exclusive right to produce, warehouse, and retail copies of particular texts—above all, compendia of the common law, necessary references whose printing had been authorized by royal patent for a number of generations prior to the civil war. When, in the 1640s, royal authority ceased to carry force, enterprising printers took the opportunity to register themselves with the publishing industry's trade association as issuers of the coveted legal compendia." Retrieved from: Josh Berson, "Intellectual Property and Cultural Appropriation," *Reviews in Anthropology* 39, (2010): 214.

¹³⁷ Ereira, *The Nine Lives of John Ogilby*, 187.

Japan and America, and Olfert Dapper, from whom he took inspiration for all his other volumes.¹³⁸

For the production and publication of *America*, in particular, it can be inferred that Ogilby had “arranged for a swift purchase” of Montanus’s work, because both his work and Montanus’s were completed in 1671.¹³⁹ What is even more noteworthy of this situation is that among all the authors Ogilby chose to acknowledge in his time as a publisher and translator, he neglected to give any credit to Montanus, even though, as mentioned previously, his *America* is a direct copy of Montanus’s work.¹⁴⁰ It would most likely be a historian whose purpose was to research the life and works of Ogilby that would happen upon this particular piece of knowledge rather than a researcher or reader who just happens upon the publication in the present, as this would certainly not have gone unnoticed at the time. But, because the work’s success was guided by Ogilby’s acts of plagiarism, it is an important feature to note.

Huitzilopochtli: An Aztec’s Deity, or a Christian’s Nightmare?

In his production of *America*, Ogilby chose to divide the volume into three distinct sections of “books” as he called them. The first book contains stories of various expeditions, while the second book gives attention to North America, most of Central America and the Caribbean, and the third and final book discusses South America.¹⁴¹ Focus for this research is on the second book and its descriptions of the lands of Mexico, within which Ogilby gives special attention to the conquests that took place. As learned with the information provided in the

¹³⁸ Ereira, *The Nine Lives of John Ogilby*, 187-188. The illustrations in Ogilby’s works were also direct copies. These works were produced by the same printer who had headed the production of the originals, so it has been suggested that Ogilby had likely struck a deal with him to lead the production of his own copies. Arnoldus Montanus’s version of the work is a German translation titled *De Nieuwe en Onbekende Weereld*, or “The New and Unknown World: or Description of America and the Southland, Containing the Origin of the Americans and South-landers, remarkable voyages thither, Quality of the Shores, Islands, Cities, Fortresses, Towns, Temples, Mountains, Sources, Rivers, Houses, the nature of Beasts, Trees, Plants and foreign Crops, Religion and Manners, Miraculous Occurrences, Old and New Wars: Adorned with Illustrations drawn from the life in America, and described by Arnoldus Montanus” in English.

¹³⁹ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 108.

¹⁴⁰ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 108.

¹⁴¹ Van Eerde, *John Ogilby and the Taste of His Times*, 108.

Florentine Codex, when the Spanish were introduced to indigenous cultural practices associated with the Aztec civilization they were shocked because they differed so much from the customs of Europeans. These experiences with new cultural contact resulted in many conflicting interpretations of how the indigenous peoples performed daily functions, most notably with their religious practices and beliefs. In particular, European adaptations of the Aztec god, Huitzilopochtli, demonstrate just how much one's cultural upbringing can affect visualization and understanding of an opposing culture's ways of life.¹⁴²

Returning now to the image that sparked the initial direction of this thesis, the depiction of Huitzilopochtli in Ogilby's *America*, located between pages 296 and 297, is a striking example of how the Christian and classical influences of Western European civilizations were incorporated into the illustrations of lesser-known cultures (fig. 1). In this image, originally published in Montanus's *The New and Unknown World* and engraved by the artist Jacob van Meurs, we see at the center a rather grotesque and nightmarish depiction of the Aztec deity. This central figure displays what one might describe as a beast comprised of a human head that wears a headdress, a human torso that contains a face, bat-like wings, and a hairy lower-half that is "clearly Pan-like with cloven hooves," standing atop a double-tiered platform that towers over the people who also occupy the room.¹⁴³ The deity holds a spiraled staff in his left hand, while he grips what appears to be a shield in his right. On the area of the platform that faces the viewer, illustrations of other shield and weapon-like figures are inscribed on the highest tier, while the lowest tier is decorated with a geometric pattern. The room in which the deity stands is clearly meant to display an intense attention to detail, as it boasts columns, drapery, and a balcony, along with other detailed architectural and decorative components.

¹⁴² This phenomenon is discussed by Restall from which he suggests that the seventeenth-century experienced what he calls a "mythistory," or "a vision of the historical past heavily infused with misconceptions and partisan interpretations so deeply rooted as to constitute legends or myths." Restall, "Spanish Creation of the Conquest of Mexico," 94.

¹⁴³ Boone, "Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural," 79 and 80. Pan refers to the god in Greek mythology who is half man, half goat.

In comparison to the illustrations of Huitzilopochtli found in the *Florentine Codex* (figs. 5, 6, and 7), van Meurs's illustration of the deity in Ogilby's *America* brings to the forefront the issues that surround the understanding of another culture's practices and how that information is processed and distributed as a source of intellectual reference. As one might infer, the descriptions of Huitzilopochtli that entered into Europe were taken predominantly from the point of view of Spanish conquistadors and chroniclers of the early colonial period.¹⁴⁴ These descriptions are typically separated into two distinct categories, each of which is associated with either the Dominican friar Diego Durán (1537-1588), or the conquistadors Hernán Cortés (1485-1547), Andrés de Tapia (1485-1561), and Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1492-1584).¹⁴⁵ Durán's description, in which he says he is relying on information gathered from both native informants and Spanish conquistadors, describes in detail how the deity ostensibly appeared in his original physical form.¹⁴⁶ In his description, Durán states that

Huitzilopochtli was a wooden statue carved in the image of a man seated upon a blue wooden bench in the fashion of a litter; from each corner there emerged a serpent-headed pole, long enough for a man to bear on his shoulder... The god's forehead was blue, and above his nose ran a blue band which reached from ear to ear. On his head he wore a rich headdress in the shape of a bird's beak. These birds were called huitzitzilin [hummingbirds]... [The idol] wore a green mantle and over this mantle, hanging from his neck, an apron or covering made of rich green feathers, adorned with gold... In his left hand he carried a white shield with five tufts of white feathers placed in the form of a cross... Extending from the handle were four arrows... In his right hand the god held a staff carved in the form of a snake, all blue and undulating... Thus garbed and adorned, the idol always stood upon a tall altar within a small chamber hung with numerous pieces of cloth decorated with jewels, gold ornaments, and feather shields... A curtain was always hung before it, indicating reverence and veneration.¹⁴⁷

From this description, it is clear that van Meurs took an extreme approach to artistic agency, almost completely altering the original description of Huitzilopochtli's main statue. For, in his depiction, the figure is clearly not a wooden statue, the figure is not seated, there is no mantle, and important iconographic details such as a hummingbird, the god's namesake, are not included.

¹⁴⁴ Boone, "Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural," 42.

¹⁴⁵ Boone, "Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural," 43.

¹⁴⁶ Boone, "Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural," 43.

¹⁴⁷ Boone, "Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural," 43-44, in reference to Diego Durán.

Although these differences are quite obvious when one compares this image to an assumed accurate description, it is clear that Ogilby never had any intention of producing a more truthful depiction of the deity, instead choosing to include the same image in his translation of Montanus and van Meurs. As it has been argued by Fernando Cervantes, Ogilby was under the influence of European conceptions of the “devil,” and kept this imagery because it was effective and was “essential to [the European] understanding of reality and human relations.”¹⁴⁸ Had Ogilby chosen to modify this imagery in any way, it is possible that it would not have had the same effect on the readers of *America* as one cannot predict a viewer’s interpretation and understanding. Without this consistency, the interest in the fantastic associated with the unknown world likely would not have had the same effect on the Christian-minded European population.

Aztecs vs. Spanish: Depictions of Each Culture’s People in *America*

As with the depictions of Huitzilopochtli, the depictions of the Aztec and Spanish peoples in *America* vary greatly. In Ogilby’s section on Mexico and the conquest, there are two images in particular that provide insight to how the Christian-European mind envisioned the presentation of Aztec peoples that I have selected for analysis. The first, from page 85, illustrates an encounter between the Spanish and Aztecs just after Montezuma had learned of the Spanish arrival (fig. 12). In this image, we see two distinct groups of people in the foreground, the Aztecs to left and the Spanish to the right, with members of both groups scattered throughout the background. Also in the background, there is shown the representation of what is clearly a volcanic eruption, complete with clouds of smoke and falling rocks.¹⁴⁹ Few depictions of the Spanish during their encounter with the Aztecs exist in *America*, with this image being one of the most effective examples because of its clarity.

¹⁴⁸ Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 2 and 159.

¹⁴⁹ John Ogilby, *America*, 85.

In a situation similar to that of the *Florentine Codex*, the presentation of each group of people is most distinctive in terms of dress and demeanor. Concerning the members of the Spanish party, they are depicted in a European style of dress, including, feather adorned hats and helmets, belted tunics, tights, and shoes, and appear to be in a seemingly calm manner. Each conquistador also has a weapon, some with rifles, and some with swords. Placed at the front of this group, Cortés is shown with both forms of weaponry. In contrast, members of the Aztec party are shown shirtless and shoeless, wearing feather skirts and headdresses, with some also appearing to be sporting arm jewelry.¹⁵⁰ Also unlike their Spanish counterparts, the Aztec peoples are shown weaponless and in an agitated demeanor. The reason for this agitation is explained in Ogilby's text as a reaction to the volcanic eruptions taking place around them because of a cultural tradition of that viewed this event as a bad omen.¹⁵¹ One might question whether Ogilby intended for this to be an interpretation of the events about to transpire from the perspective of the indigenous, or if it was actually meant to represent the impending Spanish victory.

The second image, found on page 92 of *America*, depicts what might be considered a more generalized depiction of the "savage" indigenous American (fig. 13). In this image, we see two figures to the left who are part of the indigenous upper-class, adorned in what Ogilby describes as a string of pearls around their necks, a cap with two scarves attached, and a "party-colour'd Cotton Coat" that covers their torso to their knees.¹⁵² Although there are illustrations of other people in the bottom-right corner of the image, the emphasis is clearly meant to be on the central-most figure wielding the bow and arrow. This figure, as Ogilby explains, is a member of the lower-class, specifically a slave, as they go "[s]tark naked (having only a Cloth tied about

¹⁵⁰ Rebecca P. Brien, "The Image of the 'Indian' in Early Modern Europe and Colonial Mexico," in *Visions of Empire: Picturing the Conquest in Colonial Mexico* (Miami: University of Miami and Lowe Art Museum, 2003), 30.

¹⁵¹ Ogilby, *America*, 85.

¹⁵² Ogilby, *America*, 92.

their Privities) and with a Bowe and Arrows [and] walk before their Lords.”¹⁵³ This inclusion of the bow and arrow iconography is also clearly intentional. As Michael Gaudio states, when a figure is meant to represent the culture of America, one can generally expect to see a these two elements as part of the illustration.¹⁵⁴

Interpreting Aztec Culture through the Christian-European Lens

Although the depiction of Huitzilopochtli included in the works of Ogilby and Montanus is completely inaccurate (minus a few specific details, such as with the inclusion of a staff, shield, and headdress), it is an accurate representation of the way Christian beliefs shaped Western European thought and reception of information (fig. 1). Europeans had long been under the impression that the unknown world was home to “monstrous races” and “strange customs,” and so they, of course, expected to encounter the “strange creatures and fantastic monsters,” that had long been included in the traditional writings of authors such as Pliny.¹⁵⁵ Two traditions, in particular, that arose surrounding the origins and understanding of Huitzilopochtli’s image demonstrate these expectations, the first of which saw the Aztec deity as being in line with a Graeco-Roman deity.¹⁵⁶ The second of these traditions, and arguably the more popular of the two, was constructed through Christian perspectives that saw the deity as an incarnation of the devil, which is specifically alluded to in the face depicted on the torso as this face was viewed as “reflecting Lucifer’s inner moral monstrosity.”¹⁵⁷ By this time in the seventeenth-century, references to Huitzilopochtli in travel literature had clearly evolved into a representation of the way Europeans understood foreign gods and religions rather than attempts at trying to accurately illustrate the god’s intended image.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Ogilby, *America*, 92.

¹⁵⁴ Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage*, 7.

¹⁵⁵ Boone, “Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural,” 55-56.

¹⁵⁶ Boone, “Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural,” 57.

¹⁵⁷ Boone, “Incarnations of the Aztec Supernatural,” 57.

¹⁵⁸ See Sturtevant’s “First Visual Images of Native America” for more on sources of artist inspiration, and Schmidt’s *Inventing Exoticism* for the new developments in the seventeenth-century.

Similarly, in the depictions of the Aztec and Spanish peoples, there is without question a reference to the views held by Europeans concerning indigenous cultures and their assumed savage qualities (figs. 12 and 13). Regarding these savage qualities, many of the European preconceptions about them can also be attributed to the teachings of the Christian religion. The clear distinction that is placed between the Aztecs and Spaniards, specifically concerning each group's attire in figure 12 and the inclusion of the bow and arrow in figure 13, is an example of the hierarchy that Europeans had established which placed them far above the indigenous. As Gaudio suggests, "we owe the very idea of the 'savage' to a strongly felt need in the Christian West to imagine a failure to rise above base materialism," an imagination of which is expressed through the production of prints and images like those included in Ogilby's *America*.¹⁵⁹

What one can learn from the illustrations found in Ogilby's *America* is that one's own cultural background will always affect their interpretation of an opposing culture. And, so long as the major influences of that cultural background remain intact (in this case the Western European association with the Christian religion and the idea that their civilized society was superior to all others), these interpretations will continue to be circulated, even if they are not entirely accurate. Although later European representations of Aztec culture are arguably toned down, the influence of the Christian religion combined with educational foundations based on Classics indeed remains a prominent component to the production of travel literature. In the following chapter, these same issues will be addressed, only this time seeing a focus on the eighteenth-century, and one of the most influential texts associated with the travel literature and popular religious studies of this era.

¹⁵⁹ Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage*, xxi.

CHAPTER V

THE 18TH CENTURY: BERNARD AND PICART'S *RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES OF THE WORLD*

Although religious affiliation with education remained a precedent as it had in the previous century and before, the turn of the eighteenth-century brought about many challenges regarding the status and importance of religion within this context, as well as in a more general sense. In the eighteenth-century, France was experiencing the effects of the first phase of the Enlightenment, which increased the criticism regarding religion and saw a stronger campaign for religious tolerance.¹⁶⁰ Radical thinkers, such as Voltaire and Rousseau, who were associated with the Enlightenment, were responsible for much of the religious questioning that began to take place. Through the teachings of these philosophes, the use of science and philosophical ideas to argue against the various aspects of Christianity, as well as other religions, grew at an accelerated pace.¹⁶¹ As a result, Christianity, though still very much the dominant religious institution, had begun to face more questioning, eventually lending a hand to the fate of the French church that developed alongside the ever-infamous French Revolution.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ W. Reginald Ward, *Christianity under the Ancien Régime, 1648-1789* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.), 167.

¹⁶¹ Ward, *Christianity under the Ancien Régime, 1648-1789*, 168 and 170.

¹⁶² Ward, *Christianity under the Ancien Régime, 1648-1789*, 235.

As great an influence that they may have held, philosophes of the Enlightenment period were not the only ones to question religion or express desires for greater tolerance in France during this time. In the same way that explorations to the New World during the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries affected the general understanding of the world, so too did these discoveries affect the eighteenth-century, and with an even greater influence on religious thought. After Columbus's encounter with the Americas, scholarly and open discussions of religious differences had developed into a much more prominent aspect of daily life.¹⁶³ Most notably, once the European population had decided that indigenous peoples were also human-beings like themselves, the Europeans seriously began attempting to make sense of native beliefs.¹⁶⁴

As production of travel narratives continued to increase, which included records of the new and unfamiliar religious practices of the many indigenous cultures encountered by the explorers, fundamental questions regarding their relationship to monotheism and the Judeo-Christian traditions were of the utmost importance.¹⁶⁵ This, of course, is where one of the most significant challenges of this task can be witnessed. How could members of a population so attached to the traditions and teachings of the Judeo-Christian religions truly understand the endless varieties of indigenous religious traditions outside of Western Europe? With this challenge in mind, the development of one of the most significant contributions to religious literature was initiated, leading to the publication of a comprehensive religious study that offered an honest attempt at critically questioning the subject.

Bernard and Picart: An Imbalance of Recognition and Critical Acclaim

Unlike the literary career of John Ogilby and similar others, Jean Frederic Bernard and Bernard Picart worked exclusively in the publishing sector. These two men had somewhat equal

¹⁶³ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book That Changed Europe*, 8.

¹⁶⁴ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book That Changed Europe*, 8.

¹⁶⁵ Wijnand Mijnhardt, "Jean Frederic Bernard as Author and Publisher," in *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion*, ed. by Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhardt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010), 21.

experience in the field, but only one would eventually garner the fame accrued from their most famous endeavor. It is not certain when Bernard and Picart were introduced to one another, but it is generally agreed that they knew of each other beginning around the year 1710.¹⁶⁶ After their initial meeting, the two would eventually collaborate, embarking on their best-known and most influential project, *Religious Ceremonies of the World*. Through this collaboration, the world would be introduced to the complexities of religion in a manner that was, up to this point, unprecedented.

Born in southern France in 1673, the first of these two trailblazers of religious study was Jean Frederic Bernard.¹⁶⁷ Bernard was not only the publisher, but the “unsung compiler, editor and author of this pioneering work on the world’s religions.”¹⁶⁸ A highly educated artisan without any formal higher education, Bernard was neither an ambitious intellectual nor a professional scholar.¹⁶⁹ Yet, his involvement with a publishing apprenticeship at an early age allowed him the opportunity to be surrounded by the most important books of the time, including many that were “inspired by the discoveries of new peoples and new religions.”¹⁷⁰ As influential as he was to the world of publishing, however, one would be surprised to learn that Bernard never revealed his identity in connection to the many publications he oversaw the production of, which has resulted in his intellectual contributions to the study of religion remaining largely uncredited.¹⁷¹ Because of this, Bernard’s legacy has largely been studied only by way of his more famous counterpart, Bernard Picart.

Also born in France, approximately seven years after Bernard around 1680, Bernard Picart is the second contributor to this religious studies collaboration.¹⁷² Unlike the multi-labeled

¹⁶⁶ Mijnhardt, “Jean Frederic Bernard as Author and Publisher,” 25.

¹⁶⁷ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 27.

¹⁶⁸ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 1.

¹⁶⁹ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 4.

¹⁷⁰ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 4.

¹⁷¹ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 100 and 102.

¹⁷² Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 89.

professional titles held by Bernard, Picart's most notable professional contribution is related to the more artistic side of production. The son and successor of the prosperous Catholic engraver, Etienne Picart, Picart had long been exposed to this skilled art.¹⁷³ Throughout his career, Picart would be the instructor responsible for the production of many religious prints, as well as prints that were associated with much more controversial subjects such as satirical political pamphlets.¹⁷⁴ Picart's bravery with controversial subjects would, however, soon become one of the most important assets to his future collaboration with Bernard.

As the creators of one of the most important religious studies texts, the religious backgrounds of both Bernard and Picart are a major point of interest. Their religious beliefs are unknown, but certain affiliations with the likes of Pierre Bayle and John Toland suggest that they both had a "healthy appetite for skepticism about religious orthodoxies."¹⁷⁵ Individually, however, the religious upbringing of both men is similar in that they both come from different Judeo-Christian sectors. Bernard's initial religious involvement was encompassed within the Huguenot community into which he was born.¹⁷⁶ However, Bernard has been described as "at heart a free spirit and non-conformist," which eventually led him to disengage with his original understanding of religion.¹⁷⁷ In contrast to Bernard, Picart, as mentioned previously, was initially associated with religion through his devout Catholic family. But, he too eventually left this

¹⁷³ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 45.

¹⁷⁴ Inger Leemans, "Bernard Picart's Dutch Connections: Family Trouble, the Amsterdam Theater, and the Business of Engraving," in *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion*, ed. Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhardt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010), 51.

¹⁷⁵ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 36. Pierre Bayle was a philosopher of the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth centuries. As discussed by W. R. Ward, Bayle's views on faith and religion were conflicted because he could not establish a rational ground for the Christian religion, or even monotheism. These beliefs eventually led him to leading the first European scientific criticism of religion and his participation in the movement for more religious toleration during the Enlightenment. John Toland was a contemporary figure to Bayle, whose views on religion actually stem somewhat from Bayle's. Toland was a member of the group known as the deists, and as Ward has described him, was the most political member of the group, who contributed many written works on the issues of religion throughout his lifetime.

¹⁷⁶ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 114. The Huguenot community was a Protestant religious community of mostly Calvinist beliefs.

¹⁷⁷ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 102.

practice, first drifting toward Protestantism by way of an indirect path that also brought him into contact with Jansenism and an interest for the new developments in science.¹⁷⁸

Whatever their true beliefs may have been, the ever-changing status of Bernard and Picart's religious affiliations surely impacted their future endeavors in religious literature. Exposure to so many different elements of religious practice in a time period that saw the development of religious questioning certainly had an influence on their desire to better understand how this diversity was, or was not, linked among various cultures. With questions such as this in mind, this chapter offers a detailed discussion and analysis of Bernard and Picart's most influential work. In contrast to the earlier examples of religious and travel literature discussed in previous chapters, the changes experienced within Christian religions in the eighteenth-century display a different source of questioning. Specifically, these questions concern just how effective a global perspective of religion could be in a time when the strongholds of Christian religions were weakening, as opposed to those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries discussed in the previous chapters.

Religious Ceremonies of the World: Influential Perspectives in the Study of Religion

As a source of religious study, *Religious Ceremonies of the World* is considered to be one of the best structured and most thoughtfully produced works of its time. This detailed and in-depth contribution to the field is often viewed as being a foundational text to the study of the comparative history of religion, from which engravings are still taken as authoritative sources for religious customs.¹⁷⁹ Beginning with discussions on Judaism and Catholicism, the volumes follow with descriptions of the Americas and India, Asia and Africa, the varied sectors of Protestantism, and end with Islam. Through an analysis of the religious customs that were scattered among these

¹⁷⁸ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 114. Jansenism was a movement during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries based on the writings of a man by the name of Cornelius Jansen that were characterized by moral rigor and asceticism.

¹⁷⁹ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 19.

regions, the main goal approached by Bernard and Picart is said not to have been an attempt to “dismiss religion as a mirage,” but to “discern within religious diversity itself the truths one could honestly live by and cherish.”¹⁸⁰ Understood through this guiding perspective, it is clear that Bernard and Picart did not intend for readers of *Religious Ceremonies of the World* to take offense to their study. However, when one considers the location in which their study was produced, questions regarding the true neutrality of the work are critical points of interest.

Published between the years of 1723 and 1743, *Religious Ceremonies of the World* was first and foremost an attempt made by Bernard and Picart at offering “pious examinations of non-Christian idolatry” that coincided with the standard theological arguments of the time.¹⁸¹ In their attempt to present a nonbiased approach to the study of religion, Bernard and Picart structured the study’s original seven volumes in a unique fashion. Rather than offering a concrete and continuous argument that spans the entirety of the work, the authors chose to bring together evidence from a variety of sources that included a selective menu of existing treatises, portions from other books, and original essays by Bernard.¹⁸² By compiling their study in this manner, Bernard and Picart initially had the intention in mind for readers of *Religious Ceremonies of the World* to form their own conclusions and interpretations on the various religions being analyzed, only consulting Bernard’s writing and Picart’s visuals as points of reference.¹⁸³ These examinations, however, often received less than congratulatory responses. Even though Bernard and Picart intended for their intellectual analysis to remain neutral in accordance with the influence of scientific study that was present at the time, there still remained a significant number of devout Christians who likely viewed the study as an attack on the dominant religion.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 21.

¹⁸¹ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 2.

¹⁸² Mijnhardt, “Jean Frederic Bernard as Author and Publisher,” 29.

¹⁸³ Mijnhardt, “Jean Frederic Bernard as Author and Publisher,” 29.

¹⁸⁴ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 3.

In regards to the illustrative components of *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, the engravings contributed by Picart are indeed significant. Picart's engravings have been described as not only acting as auxiliaries to the text, but offering a "separate, highly condensed commentary on the meaning and value of the different religious practices found around the globe."¹⁸⁵ Rather than exploiting the aspects of other cultures considered to be strange and violent by the typical European citizen, Picart made an honest attempt at highlighting the complexities of the various world religions from the point of view of the culture he was depicting.¹⁸⁶ This was, however, not always the easiest task, and it often resulted in Picart adapting images of unfamiliar religions that were already in existence in less than subtle fashions.

In a situation similar to that of Ogilby's production of *America*, Bernard and Picart's production of *Religious Ceremonies of the World* also saw its fair share of plagiarism. Because it is the images within Bernard and Picart's work more so than the text that are of concern for this study, a discussion of its sources of artistic inspiration are of particular interest. Because images of indigenous and unfamiliar religions were often difficult to come by in Europe, Picart's depictions of these subjects often relied heavily on images produced by earlier engravers such as Theodor de Bry, as well as Jacob van Meurs, who had also served as a point of reference to Ogilby.¹⁸⁷ Though this is the case, and Picart did, quite literally, plagiarize many of the prints used in *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, it has been argued that Picart offered a relatively valid reasoning towards his actions. When copying works, especially those of de Bry, Picart said that his reasoning was not to intentionally imitate other great illustrations. He simply chose to reproduce already well-known images because "he prided himself on using existing images and written accounts" in order to retain an "undisputed credibility."¹⁸⁸ Because of their ambitious

¹⁸⁵ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 5.

¹⁸⁶ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 5.

¹⁸⁷ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 149-150. Theodor de Bry was a sixteenth-century Flemish Lutheran Engraver who worked first in England and later in Frankfurt.

¹⁸⁸ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 143.

intentions concerned with presenting information that was as accurate as possible and unattached to their personal beliefs, the production of *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, even with its moments of plagiarized material, proved to be an impactful catalyst towards understanding religious differences.

Huitzilopochtli: An Aztec Deity in the Guise of a Classical Figure

In *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, the first foreign lands that are discussed are those of the Americas, following Bernard's introductory writings that discuss various facets of the Christian religion. This choice of organization is of particular interest to this study, not only because it is concerned with a culture that inhabited these lands, but because it also demonstrates an issue that was critical to Bernard. Placing the Americas first in *Religious Ceremonies of the World* was done intentionally by Bernard because he found within the Americas "the most telling evidence of universal religious impulses."¹⁸⁹ In order to demonstrate this, Bernard opens the volume with an essay on idolatry and how the peoples inhabiting the Americas display the processes of religious conformity in their customs as they derive from a variety of other ancient and modern peoples.¹⁹⁰ Organizing the volumes in this manner, then, also highlights Bernard's belief that European scholars could not accurately judge other religious systems without being able to understand their languages, especially when their practices were taken out of context.¹⁹¹ It should be noted, then, that the information discussed is based on the use of European sources that explore Aztec religious practices from the pre-Hispanic era rather than post-contact period.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 217.

¹⁹⁰ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 217.

¹⁹¹ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 7.

¹⁹² Verónica A. Gutiérrez, "Quetzalcoatl's Enlightened City: A Close Reading of Bernard Picart's Engraving of Cholollan/Cholula," in *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion*, ed. Lynn Hunt, Margaret Jacob, and Wijnand Mijnhardt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010), 253. To clarify, Bernard and Picart were not relying on sources of a "pre-Columbian" nature. They were, however, relying on what they designated as eyewitness accounts in order to construct an image of pre-contact Aztec religious culture that was as accurate as possible, though it was being presented from the perspective of a Christian European lens. For example, some of the sources that Bernard and Picart's study cites are Bernal Díaz del Castillo, accounts of Cortés recorded by Francisco López de Gómara (c. 1511-1566), and travel reports published by the English cleric Samuel Purchas (c. 1577-1626).

Viewing Bernard's approach to study from this perspective, it is clear that the religions of the Americas were of great importance to understanding how such practices vary by culture.

Unlike the grotesque and nightmarish van Meurs depiction of Huitzilopochtli that is found in Ogilby's *America* (fig. 1), the depiction of the deity that is found in *Religious Ceremonies of the World* is rather tame and, quite literally, statuesque, displaying neoclassical elements (fig. 4). And, although Picart is known to have often copied engravings from others, especially de Bry, it appears to be the case that this representation was formed solely by Picart because there are no comparable illustrations of indigenous deities from earlier engravers, including de Bry.¹⁹³ Situated among four other representations of Aztec deities, this rendition of Huitzilopochtli, or as Picart spells it, "Vitzliputli," is shown forward-facing, seated atop a European style pedestal, shoeless, holding implements of war, with similar objects used as decorative elements on the platform (fig. 14).¹⁹⁴ The figure is set rather far back in the illustration, causing the deity to appear quite small in comparison to the other deities that are depicted on the same plate. Even still, the figure is centrally located within its frame and in solidarity. Positioning the figure in this way, as Verónica A. Gutiérrez argues, was intentional and done so in order to make the viewer's gaze and engagement with the image function as a replication to the gaze of a Mexica, or Aztec, worshipper.¹⁹⁵ Gutiérrez's argument for this particular function of the image is incredibly intriguing, especially when one considers its close connection to one of Picart's most pressing motives of his engraving process.

Just by briefly glancing over Picart's depiction of Huitzilopochtli, the more classicized elements of the deity's dress and position are rather prominent characteristics. The inclusion of these elements, however, are also somewhat equally mixed with what are said to be more "faithful" historical accounts, in reference to the sculpted hummingbird that is attached to the

¹⁹³ Gutiérrez, "Quetzalcoatl's Enlightened City," 255.

¹⁹⁴ Gutiérrez, "Quetzalcoatl's Enlightened City," 255.

¹⁹⁵ Gutiérrez, "Quetzalcoatl's Enlightened City," 255.

deity's headdress.¹⁹⁶ Even though the addition of more truthful ornamentation is present, the most significant feature of Picart's representation of the deity remains the more classicized elements. What makes these features so important to this study is that they were an extremely pivotal point of Picart's production process. In order to be more accessible to his European audience, Picart attempted to stay as true to the original source as possible, but he opted to include subtle comparisons between dominant Western and non-Western cultural practices.¹⁹⁷ To present such comparisons, Picart often manipulated the images of religious culture by depicting unfamiliar deities on classical pedestals, such as with his illustration of Huitzilopochtli, excluding scenes that identified the figures depicted, or adding landscapes or architectural elements that would be familiar to his European viewers.¹⁹⁸ Though these Europeanized manipulations are present in this image and the plate on which it is included (fig. 14), the ways that Picart chose to alter and not alter his depictions of the indigenous peoples is another point of particular interest for further examination.

The "Aztecs" are Represented, but Where are the Spanish?

In contrast to other sources of travel literature or religious study, one keen difference that can be witnessed in *Religious Ceremonies of the World* is that Bernard and Picart chose to refer to the peoples of the Aztec culture as "Mexicans" rather than "Aztecs." Such a choice was made because the authors viewed this civilization from the perspective that their culture had changed drastically after the Spanish conquest.¹⁹⁹ This difference in perspective of culture is one of the many ways in which Bernard and Picart's attempt at presenting an analytical study of the world's religions without the veil of a Western bias is rather effective. However, this particular choice of description could also be seen as problematic considering the fact that Bernard and Picart claim to have had the intention of consulting pre-Hispanic, rather than post-contact, sources.

¹⁹⁶ Pohl, Lyons, and J. Paul Getty Museum, *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*, 36.

¹⁹⁷ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 150.

¹⁹⁸ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 150.

¹⁹⁹ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 226.

With this development in mind, the visual illustrations of the indigenous peoples that Bernard and Picart chose to include are rather successful attempts at representing the more physical attributes of Aztec culture. As with the previous chapter on Ogilby's *America*, I have selected illustrations that I feel are the best examples of the way Bernard and Picart chose to represent the Aztec peoples. In contrast to the illustrations found in Ogilby, Bernard and Picart have included many depictions of high ranking members of Aztec society, specifically with illustrations that represent high priests. On the same four-quadrant plate that the engraving of Huitzilopochtli is located (fig. 14), so too is an engraving of a high priest found positioned in the lower-right-hand corner (fig. 15). In this image, the high priest can be identified through the stylistic details of his feathered headdress, cloak held in place by a pendant, a tunic, sandals, hoop earrings, and braided hair, all of which are attributes that indicate his high rank.²⁰⁰ He is also shown holding a knife in his right hand which can be associated with his authority and ability to perform sacrificial rituals.

The details of the priest are then contrasted with the adornments of the other figure in the image, assumed to be a young indigenous male, who is shown wearing a tunic, but no cloak, sandals, and with hair fashioned in a ponytail style. That Picart chose to include these stylistic details to designate this figure as a high priest is important to note because, as Gutiérrez has pointed out, he recycles some of the same visual symbols used in another illustration in which the setting of religious worship of the god Quetzalcoatl is depicted (fig. 16).²⁰¹ The similarities found in Picart's depiction of Quetzalcoatl and the high priest can be seen in their attire, specifically with their feathered headdresses, tunics, and cloaks. Gutiérrez suggests that Picart's choice of similar styling was because it would have made for an easier distinction of the high priest from

²⁰⁰ Gutiérrez, "Quetzalcoatl's Enlightened City," 255-261.

²⁰¹ Gutiérrez, "Quetzalcoatl's Enlightened City," 253 and 255. In figure 16, there is depicted a scene of Aztec peoples worshipping the god Quetzalcoatl in Cholollan, or what is more commonly known by its Europeanized name, Cholula as the Spanish had renamed it around 1529. Quetzalcoatl is shown sitting atop a pedestal while surrounded by worshippers.

the perspective of a European viewer.²⁰² This form of adaptation can also be found within other illustrations of the indigenous, as well and will be of important focus at the end of this section.

One important quality to take note of when analyzing the illustrative content of *Religious Ceremonies of the World* is that it is only in their discussion of the cultures of Mexico and Peru that Bernard and Picart chose to include any scenes that depict violence.²⁰³ Considering this fact, the second image I have chosen to include in this section is an image that displays a festival scene in which more commoners are represented (fig. 17). In this image, Bernard provides a textual description of a specific scene stating:

In fine, the *Mexicans*, and particularly the Inhabitants of *Tlascalla*, worshipped one God, who, during his Abode in this World, had been a great Hunter. He was honour'd with a solemn Party of Hunting, as we see it represented in the Plate. Whilst the God stood on an Altar placed on the Top of a Mountain, round which they had lighted several Fires, the devout Hunters pursued the wild Beasts, who, in order to escape the Violence of the Flames, fled towards the Top of the Mountain. They used to knock these Beasts down before the Idol, and sacrifice their Hearts in his Honour. The Chase concluded with Songs of Mirth and joyful Acclamations, after which the Hunters brought back the Idol in Triumph, and a solemn Feast concluded the Devotion of that Day.²⁰⁴

In the image, numerous individuals are seen, some of whom are only partially clothed, and holding weapons of either bow and arrows or club-like objects. Although they are killing animals rather than sacrificing humans as the Aztecs were so infamous for, the image still conveys a sense of chaos, even if it does seem slightly staged. This, along with the representations of the indigenous figures, portrays the symbols of savage qualities that are so inherently distinctive of European representations of indigenous Americans as suggested by Gaudio.

As it can be inferred from the subtitle of this section, there is an unequal balance of illustrative representation between the Aztecs and the Spanish European peoples. This imbalance

²⁰² Gutiérrez, "Quetzalcoatl's Enlightened City," 255.

²⁰³ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhart, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 224.

²⁰⁴ Bernard Picart, *The Ceremonies and Religious Customs of the Various Nations of the Known World Together with Historical Annotations, and Several Curious Discourses Equally Instructive and Entertaining. ... Written Originally in French, and Illustrated ... by Mr. Bernard Picart, ... Translated into English, by a Gentleman, ...* (London: Printed by William Jackson, for Claude Du Bosc, 1734), 157.

is so extreme, in fact, that there are no depictions of the Spanish included in the section on the Aztecs at all. This exclusion, though, is purposeful, because it would align with the initial intention of Bernard and Picart to have the content of *Religious Ceremonies of the World* reflect the pre-Hispanic culture of the Aztecs rather than post-contact. The decision is significant because it is one instance in which the authors make a serious attempt at dismantling the ever-constant problem of the European perspective being privileged with similar studies and works of travel literature. However, even with these attempts, both the illustrations of higher ranking individuals and commoners reflect critical issues in terms of their representational qualities.

Interpreting Aztec Culture through a “Diluted” European Lens

When comparing the literary and scholarly choices made by Bernard and Picart versus those of Ogilby, it is clear that Bernard and Picart are more closely in line with the methods used by Sahagún in the *Florentine Codex*. Although Bernard and Picart were closer in relation to Ogilby where their religious associations are concerned, their attempt to remove any potential religious bias matches the efforts of Sahagún. This, however, is only visible with the texts of *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, as it is not as well translated in the images of the work. The renditions of Aztec religious figures, like Huitzilopochtli and the other gods engraved on the same plate (fig. 14), still depict highly European ideals, as they are even more classicized in form than the illustration in Ogilby’s *America* (fig. 1). Even in an environment said to be less tightly affiliated with Christian influence, Bernard and Picart’s representation of Aztec religious beliefs display the overwhelming influence one’s cultural surroundings have on the perception of a culture that differs from their own.

In terms of their illustrations of the Aztec, or “Mexican,” peoples, Bernard and Picart’s approach is somewhat of a middle ground between the illustrations in the *Florentine Codex* and *America*. As can be seen in figure eight from the *Florentine Codex*, Bernard and Picart’s depictions of the indigenous peoples at times show them in a more fully clothed manner like

those shown in figures 15 and 16. However, because Bernard and Picart chose to include scenes of violence when discussing the peoples of Mexico and Peru, there are also depictions that display more stereotypically “savage” characteristics, such as the wielding of bows and arrows shown in figure 17, as has been discussed by Gaudio. And, even though it is animals that are being slaughtered in this image rather than humans, the chaos that is displayed from the festival clearly represents the indigenous peoples in a manner that sets them apart from what would be considered “civilized” by the typical European.

As with Ogilby and *America*, it is made apparent in *Religious Ceremonies of the World* that personal cultural backgrounds are highly influential on one’s perception of another culture, whether it is specifically with religion or with a civilization as a whole. *Religious Ceremonies of the World* certainly displays a major turning point in European attitudes toward religious beliefs, as argued by Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, as it proved an honest attempt at comparing and critiquing world religions through equal terms.²⁰⁵ Likewise, the opportunity that Bernard and Picart offered to their readers to draw their own conclusions about religion was an example that even if one has a certain opinion on cultural practices that are different from their own, it is possible not to insist on a single perspective.²⁰⁶ Analogies formed between indigenous American cultures and Graeco-Roman traditions had long been a custom of travel writing, and this remains evident in *Religious Ceremonies of the World* with its depictions of Aztec culture.²⁰⁷ However, it is also clear, whether or not it was a product of the transformations of their own religious cultural influences, that Bernard and Picart were determined to prove that cultural differences should not create the boundaries they tend to form. And, when the intention of a literary work is to educate its readers about opposing cultures, it should be done so in a manner like that proposed by

²⁰⁵ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 1-2.

²⁰⁶ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 11. This, of course, would be for the people of the time. As I argued with the Getty exhibition, drawing one’s own conclusions should only be done when an extensive research background is available to consult. Religion is highly complex, so I believe they meant this to be a way of loosening the ties religion has to one’s personal perspective.

²⁰⁷ Hunt, Jacob, and Mijnhardt, *The Book that Changed Europe*, 215.

Sahagún with the *Florentine Codex* so that it can act as an informative source that it does not display an overarching veil of bias.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: ACKNOWLEDGING APPROPRIATION

After examining sources that document the cultural history of the Aztec empire from three different centuries, authors, and publishers of different European backgrounds, the final step in this study is to evaluate how the production of each is situated within the broader contexts of cultural appropriation. As discussed in the second chapter, instances of cultural appropriation that are located within the confines of the museum can be defined as either object or subject appropriation. With the three texts from Sahagún, Ogilby, and Bernard and Picart, it is clear that the category of subject appropriation is the most applicable to the foundational question of this study. More specifically, these works cannot be classified as materials that were once owned by one culture that are now in the possession of another. What they demonstrate, then, are the two main contexts of subject appropriation that are concerned with the arts and social sciences: they are visual representations of one culture that are put on display for an audience from another culture to view.

How do Colonial Era Sources Contribute to Appropriation in the Mainstream Museum?

With the exception of the *Florentine Codex*, because it was indigenous illustrators who produced the images (although it could still be argued that Sahagún's influence impacted the authenticity of the work), both Ogilby's *America* and Bernard and Picart's *Religious Ceremonies*

of the World display the process of one culture attempting to represent aspects of another through artistic renderings. The sources from which the information used to develop the illustrations and texts that fill the pages of works like *America* and *Religious Ceremonies of the World* are derived from what Fabiana Serviddio has described as “stories and description[s] brought by the first American travelers regarding the backwardness of life” that Europeans witnessed in the new regions they encountered.²⁰⁸ From their travels, stories of civilizations that were “untouched by modern progress,” continued the tradition of Western Europeans creating an “imaginary place” that coincided with the long held belief that the unknown lands of the Americas were inhabited by otherworldly creatures.²⁰⁹ Likewise, they exhibit the precedent of European artists assuming that all non-Europeans resembled each other because they lacked appropriate models and practiced mixing images from their own culture with New World settings, as stated by William C. Sturtevant.²¹⁰

These imaginary constructions, then, display what Mari Carmen Ramirez has argued is the “pervasive notion of cultural identity in the Latin American discourse.”²¹¹ This discourse, she suggests, “constitutes a specific ideology invoked by national elites at different historical junctures” when confronted with aspects related to the ethnocentric mindsets of First World powers.²¹² By continually producing and distributing images that presented the Aztecs and other Latin American cultures in characteristically “savage” ways, as discussed by Michael Gaudio, the perception of these non-Western civilizations was permanently established. This establishment can be credited to the processes involved with subject appropriation.

From the social science perspective of subject appropriation, when documents like the *Florentine Codex*, *America*, and *Religious Ceremonies of the World* are displayed in museums

²⁰⁸ Serviddio, “Exhibiting Identity,” 482.

²⁰⁹ Serviddio, “Exhibiting Identity,” 482.

²¹⁰ Sturtevant, “First Visual Images of Native America,” 417.

²¹¹ Ramirez, “Beyond ‘the Fantastic’,” 67.

²¹² Ramirez, “Beyond ‘the Fantastic’,” 67.

today, as they were in *The Aztec Pantheon* exhibition, the interactive qualities they possess are another way that the misrepresentation of Latin American culture is perpetuated. Every museum exhibition is planned and conducted in a specific manner, but it goes without question that the purpose of each is to educate its audience members by introducing them to new material. As such, it is expected that the audience members will interact with the materials that are showcased in order to absorb the information they are presented with. However, this expectation of social interaction, in combination with the all too often misrepresentative imagery that is provided, is where many of the issues with subject appropriation occur.

Addressing the Lack of Representation and Attention to “Correct” Latin American History

As Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Carl Grodach have suggested, museums today are not only locations in which high art and culture are compiled, but are now much more heavily situated in a “populist, entertainment-oriented role.”²¹³ This ever-increasing trend has then caused the intended purpose of the museum exhibition as an educational source to form an even greater dimension of gray area concerning its validation. Exhibitions that are focused on art-based subjects exist in the form of what Ramirez has expressed as “privileged vehicles for the representation of individual and collective identities, whether they consciously set out to be so or not.”²¹⁴ This means that it is imperative for museums to present information that is as accurate as possible for the subjects they exhibit because they are institutions from which audience members expect legitimate historical research and documentation. The need for successful representation of all cultures is important, yet with stereotypically non-Western cultures, like those of Latin American backgrounds, the privileged status and entertainment-oriented role that has become so prominent within the institution of museums has resulted in their misrepresentation. As such, museum audiences are exposed to sources of educational material that are not always adequate,

²¹³ Loukaitou-Sideris and Grodach, “Displaying and Celebrating the ‘Other’,” 50.

²¹⁴ Ramirez, “Beyond ‘the Fantastic’,” 60.

and therefore unknowingly perpetuating the cycle of accepting the sources as truth, even when they are likely not as fact-based as one would assume them to be.

Beginning in the late 1970s, there was what many scholars have labeled the “exhibition boom” in the United States in regards to the increase in exhibitions dedicated to Latin American culture, as well as other minority groups.²¹⁵ An increase of this nature would seem to be a positive change, but it has also led to many discrepancies in terms of representation. Because the museum is so highly praised as a location in which history is preserved, it has a tendency to ignore minority groups by giving attention to the more Western subjects that dominate its collections and the more popular historical narratives. This tendency is a result of what some scholars, such as Arlene Dávila, see as museums resorting to the ranking and valuing of particular countries, cultures, and artists.²¹⁶ The process of ranking and valuing that ensues, she argues, is based on “notions of ‘authenticity’,” which then results in a reduction of the artistic expression of Latin American regions, leaving a “one-dimensional or false mode of expression.”²¹⁷ From this perspective, it is clear that not only is the amount of representation a specific culture receives in an exhibition important, but so too is the way that it is displayed.

Scholar Alice Wexler has addressed these discrepancies of representation from the educational perspective of museum exhibitions. Due to its privileged status, the curatorial component of the museum, Wexler argues, is “often thinly veiled racism in which quality and taste, couched in the rhetoric of multiculturalism, goes unchallenged.”²¹⁸ The traditional and well-funded art museum, she states, tends to favor particular modes of aesthetic orientation that cause audience members to become passive with their intake of new information, therefore ignoring issues of the museum’s institutional power over representation which, in turn, leads to a constant

²¹⁵ Ramirez, “Beyond ‘the Fantastic’,” 60; Loukaitou-Sideris and Grodach, “Displaying and Celebrating the ‘Other’,” 53.

²¹⁶ Dávila, “Latinizing Culture,” 181

²¹⁷ Ramirez, “Beyond ‘the Fantastic’,” 64.

²¹⁸ Alice Wexler, “Museum Culture and the Inequities of Display and Representation,” *Visual Arts Research*. 33 no. 1 (2007): 26

misrepresentation of cultural identities.²¹⁹ As much as museums may try to promote their intentions of presenting a multiculturalist perspective to lesser represented groups, like those of Latin America, these multiculturalist tactics often result in an “essentialized view of cultural identities,” viewing them as “single, concrete, and identifiable entities” that are distinguishable through distinctive characteristics.²²⁰ Such views, then, limit the extent to which accurate information can be presented to a museum’s audience because they hinder the amount of detail that can be included in educational materials that accompany an exhibition.²²¹

Although many exhibitions lack adequate modes of representations, there are, of course, many exhibitions that have proved to be consistent in their intentions of presenting accurate and well-rounded images of the Aztecs and their culture. One example, in particular, is the exhibition held at the Guggenheim Museum in New York from October 15, 2004-February 13, 2005 titled, *The Aztec Empire*. This exhibition was successful with its intentions because it was dedicated to promoting insight into not only Aztec culture, as it is often distinguished as a civilization separate from others, but to highlighting the features that aided in its development, including the peoples they conquered and the Mesoamerican cultures that preceded them.²²² And, unlike *The Aztec Pantheon and the Art of Empire*, *The Aztec Empire* asks viewers not to develop their own ideas on the links that exist between European works like Ogilby and Bernard and Picart’s, but to “simultaneously contemplate and examine artworks created by the inhabitants of Mexico-

²¹⁹ Wexler, “Museum Culture and the Inequities of Display and Representation,” 26.

²²⁰ Dávila, “Latinizing Culture,” 183.

²²¹ Wexler, “Museum Culture and the Inequities of Display and Representation,” 25.

²²² Thomas Krens, foreward to *The Aztec Empire*, ed. by Felipe Solís, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and Consejo Nacional Para La Cultura Y Las Artes (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004), 21. Sponsors of this exhibition were Banamex Citigroup and Grupo Televisa. Contributing institutions include: Centro Regional Cultural Apaxco; Museo de las Culturas de Oaxaca; Museo del Templo Mayor; Museo Nacional de Arte in Mexico City; Museo Regional de Guadalajara; Museo Regional de Puebla; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University, among many others.

Tenochtitlan alongside those of other contemporaneous cultures.”²²³ By situating the Aztec artworks within this context, it would allow for the viewers of the exhibition to have a better understanding of how Latin American cultures are associated with one another, and that each individual culture has its own characteristics that set them apart. This exhibition does, however, include manuscripts that have a European influence, such as the *Florentine Codex*, but they are used as sources from which indigenous perspectives are analyzed, and give attention to the mythic narratives that explain both their culture and the events of conquest.²²⁴ A perspective of this nature is an ideal method for presenting complex histories and artworks to a general audience because although it is still dense material, it is provided in such a way that it is comprehensive, yet still accessible.

What Can be Done to Reverse the Traditions that Perpetuate Acts of Appropriation?

Acknowledging the issues of appropriation that are perpetrated by the museum, whether they are intentional or not, expresses the need for an evaluation of the institution’s actions and an understanding of just how influential they are to the education of its audiences. The misrepresentation of Latin American and other minority cultures is an extension of the Eurocentric mindset that is present in Latin American scholarship.²²⁵ These Eurocentric tendencies, then, affect the aspect of collective remembering that museums project by generating what Loukaitou-Sideris and Grodach have described as “hybrid cultures which are largely unremembered within existing institutional representations of the past.”²²⁶ In order to combat this hybridization, Ramirez has suggested that a more accurate approach to representing Latin American culture can be achieved through a more “thorough questioning of the centrality of

²²³ Felipe Solís, introduction to *The Aztec Empire* ed. by Felipe Solís, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and Consejo Nacional Para La Cultura Y Las Artes (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004), 26.

²²⁴ Sergio Raúl Arroyo, preface to *The Aztec Empire* ed. by Felipe Solís, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and Consejo Nacional Para La Cultura Y Las Artes (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2004), 9.

²²⁵ Dávila, “Latinizing Culture,” 182.

²²⁶ Loukaitou-Sideris and Grodach, “Displaying and Celebrating the ‘Other’,” 50.

prevailing curatorial practices and the development of exhibition criteria from within the traditions and conventions” of the cultures that are being exhibited.²²⁷

In order to promote this more thorough questioning, Wexler proposes that art-based educational practices should address the discourse of representation. Wexler’s argument for this approach is that if audiences are encouraged to “deconstruct the control of knowledge and power,” it will enable them to “analyze the difference between objective knowledge and the cultural norms, values, and standards of society.”²²⁸ The consensus is, then, that every effort must be made to reduce the effects of Eurocentric tendencies that control the scholarship and presentation of Latin American cultures that are intended to reach a more general and popular audience. And, because the museum is of such great influence for this scholarship and presentation, it should be of high priority.

Latin American Contributions Towards more Accurate Attempts at Representation

Even though the most critical concern for an accurate projection of Latin American cultures lies within the realm of the many Eurocentric problems that plague museums, it should also come as no surprise that Latin American communities themselves are working towards the fight for equal representation. Just as representation has been addressed in the more public sector by traditionally marginalized groups, like those who identify as Latin American, members of these communities are working to correct their lack of representation within the institution of museums. Although it is not often acknowledged, unless included in studies such as this one, it is generally understood that a large majority of the objects that are housed within museum collections were, quite literally, stolen. These instances of object appropriation then offer the Eurocentric-minded museum the opportunity to profit from the artifacts so clearly stolen from non-Western cultures.

²²⁷ Ramirez, “Beyond ‘the Fantastic’,” 67.

²²⁸ Wexler, “Museum Culture and the Inequities of Display and Representation,” 25.

One example of this circumstance can be witnessed in regards to the well-known artifact most often referred to as Montezuma's Headdress, or "Penacho," that is housed in Vienna's Weltmuseum Wien (fig. 18).²²⁹ This so-called headdress is comprised of long plumes of quetzal bird feathers, held in place by designs formed from gold.²³⁰ This characteristic symbol of the Aztec Empire has long been discussed in terms of its accepted origins, including debates about whether or not it is actually the headdress of Montezuma, as well as if it was part of the infamous set of expensive gifts given by the emperor to Cortés when the Spanish reached Tenochtitlan in 1519.²³¹ That this artifact is located in a European institution is not anything out of the ordinary. However, what is quite shocking is that a copy of the headdress was created in 1985 to give to the Museo Nacional de Antropología in Mexico City (fig. 19).²³² Like many non-Western countries, the anthropological museum in Mexico City has attempted many times to have the headdress returned to their possession. However, Mexico views artifacts from the pre-Conquest era as national property, and if it is ever returned to their possession, it must then stay in the country meaning further legal battles could ensue.²³³

Within the last six years, the Mexican government has agreed to consider changing their rules for property of this nature so that the headdress could be returned to their possession, but be available for an extended loan to the museum in Vienna in order to work around this law.²³⁴ Even though the Mexican government would technically be in possession of the artifact, this agreement is another instance in which the non-European culture is being subject to the demands of a European power that is profiting from the display of stolen property. This return of an item to

²²⁹ Dúrdica Ségota, "The Radiance of Feathers," in *Images Take Flight: Feather Art in Mexico and Europe 1400-1700*, ed. by Alessandra Russo, Gerhard Wolf, and Diana Fane (Munich: Hirmer Publishers, 2015), 379.

²³⁰ Ségota, "The Radiance of Feathers," 379.

²³¹ Christian Feest, "Mexican Featherwork in Austrian Habsburg Collections," in *Images Take Flight: Feather Art in Mexico and Europe 1400-1700*, ed. by Alessandra Russo, Gerhard Wolf, and Diana Fane (Munich: Hirmer Publishers, 2015), 294.

²³² Ségota, "The Radiance of Feathers," 379.

²³³ "Mexico Aztec headdress could go home from Austria," *BBC News: Latin America and Caribbean*, April 28, 2012, accessed August 31, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-17878130>.

²³⁴ "Mexico Aztec headdress could go home from Austria," *BBC News: Latin America and Caribbean*.

Mexico that so clearly belongs to it would appear to be a step in the right direction. With this action, one could argue that the Mexican government regaining control over the object provides them with the opportunity to distance themselves from the stronghold of colonialist tactics. However, it also posits the question of whether or not this is a mutual and ethical agreement as one could also argue that the non-European culture is once again being forced to conform to and follow the orders of the more dominant Western power.

In a different, yet similar situation, those who do not have direct control over the institution of museums, but are directly linked to them, are also making an attempt to show their desires to reverse the effects of Eurocentric tendencies practiced by museums. For example, approximately twenty years ago in 1997, Mexican-Canadian artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer designed a light installation titled *Displaced Emperors: Relational Architecture 2* that covered public spaces in Linz, Austria.²³⁵ One component of the installation saw Lozano-Hemmer displaying a digital image of the headdress believed to have belonged to Montezuma on the side of the Habsburg Castle, now a museum, clearly addressing the protest surrounding the Austrian possession of the artifact (fig. 20).²³⁶ Even though the subject matter of this installation was rather intense in nature, the process that Lozano-Hemmer used to create the installation made it seem as though audience members were “playfully seduced” into their interactions with the “luscious imagery and music.”²³⁷ Though playful in nature, it is clear that Lozano-Hemmer was intent on bringing more public awareness to the ongoing battle of the rightful possession of cultural artifacts. Therefore, the artist was doing his part in attempting to correct the wrongs caused by acts of both object and subject appropriation that are experienced by Latin American cultures.

²³⁵ Maria Fernández, *Cosmopolitanism in Mexican Visual Culture* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 278.

²³⁶ Fernández, *Cosmopolitanism in Mexican Visual Culture*, 279.

²³⁷ Fernández, *Cosmopolitanism in Mexican Visual Culture*, 280.

Final Remarks

Although this study has examined only a small quantity of the historical documents available within their broader categories, each set of information provides an important insight for the longevity of the issue of misrepresentation among Latin American cultures. By looking at Sahagún and his oversight of the production of the *Florentine Codex* with the help of indigenous hands, it is clear that not all European based documentary sources were developed with misguided perspectives. As it is understood through Sahagún's writing, the *Florentine Codex* was intended to act as the most accurate depiction of the Aztec culture as possible through the combination of its texts and accompanying illustrations. Likewise, as seen with Bernard and Picart's *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, some authors and illustrators of cultural encyclopedic volumes attempted to present information about cultures other than their own, including the Aztecs, by reworking biases that may have been influenced by their European backgrounds.

However, a large portion of the works produced within the broader context of this genre, like Ogilby's *America*, were fully intent on preserving the European fascination and beliefs of an unknown world inhabited by heathen civilizations and strange creatures as they constantly circulated the same inaccurate imagery, even if it was influenced by marketing ploys. This fascination and the continuous production of such sources is why research, like that which I have undertaken in this study, is of such great importance. In order to accurately present information about Latin American cultures, the Aztec civilization included, it is imperative that mainstream museums do everything in their power to expose the veil of Western European dominance that has so blatantly undermined the histories of non-Western cultures. If this action can be taken, it may very well improve the distribution of, and reception of, the cultural influences that affect the preservation of history.

As it can be inferred by my inclusion of more recent examples of attempts to reverse the actions that have led to the misrepresentation Latin American cultures, there are certainly many other aspects connected to the phenomenon than those which exist in the illustrations that fill travel narratives and encyclopedic documents. I have simply chosen to pursue the questions guiding this study through the perspective of these documents because they are such foundational components to the distribution of knowledge that has influenced the perception of Latin American culture to society as a whole. With this in mind, the final question to address before concluding this study is connected to the concept of cultural appropriation.

I began this study with the intention of questioning whether or not the continuous cycle of inaccurate imagery and biased information can be labeled as a contributor to acts of cultural appropriation. When I began this research process, it was suggested to me that I might find the term “cultural appropriation” to be too strong of a term from which to classify the effects of misrepresentation. After having completed my research and examination, I am in agreement that making an argument for the broader definition of cultural appropriation in this frame of research may, in fact, be too overarching. However, I am now confident in making the argument that it is appropriate to view the continuous presentation of misinformed documentation from the perspective of the more narrowed terms of subject and object appropriation. It is not so much that the institution of the museum has literally, or even figuratively, adopted or appropriated the culture of Latin American communities as would be suggested by the term “cultural appropriation.” However, it is a more accurate and logical argument to propose that museums have appropriated the objects and subjects of Latin American culture, which has resulted in a continuous cycle of their all-too-often inaccurate models of cultural and historical representation.

FIGURES



Vitzliputzli idolum Mexicanorum.

Figure 1.
“Viztliputzli idolum Mexicanorum.” John Ogilby’s *America*, 1671.

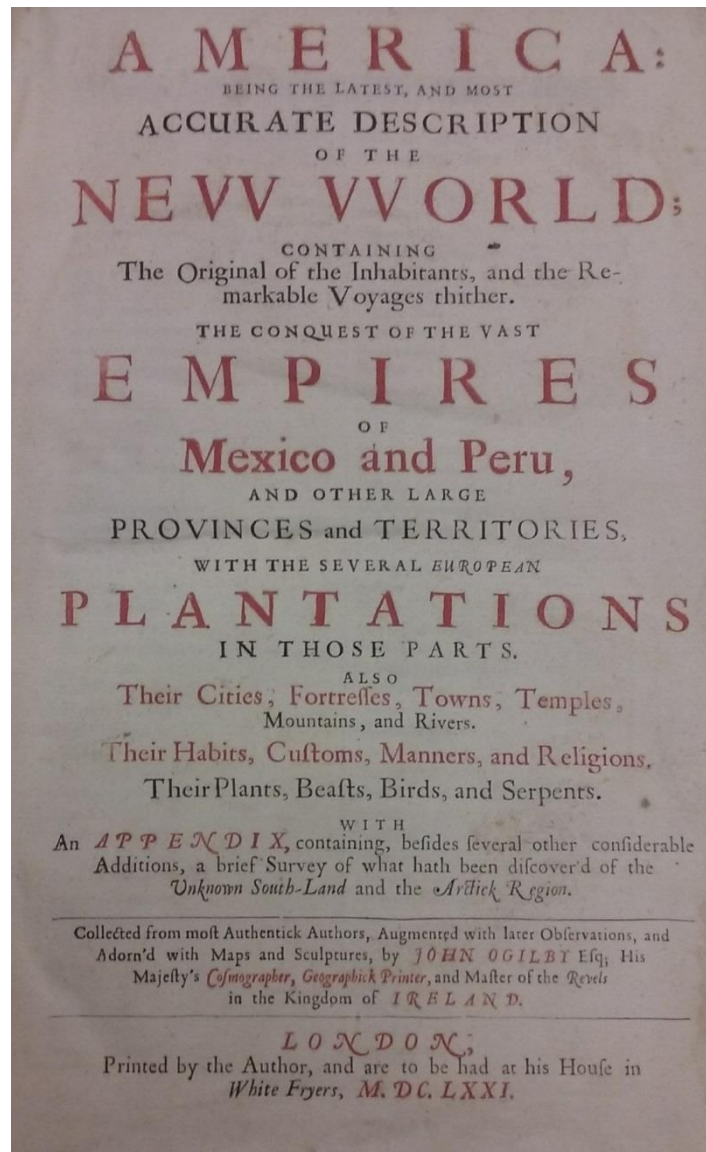


Figure 2.
“Title Page.” John Ogilby’s *America*, 1671.

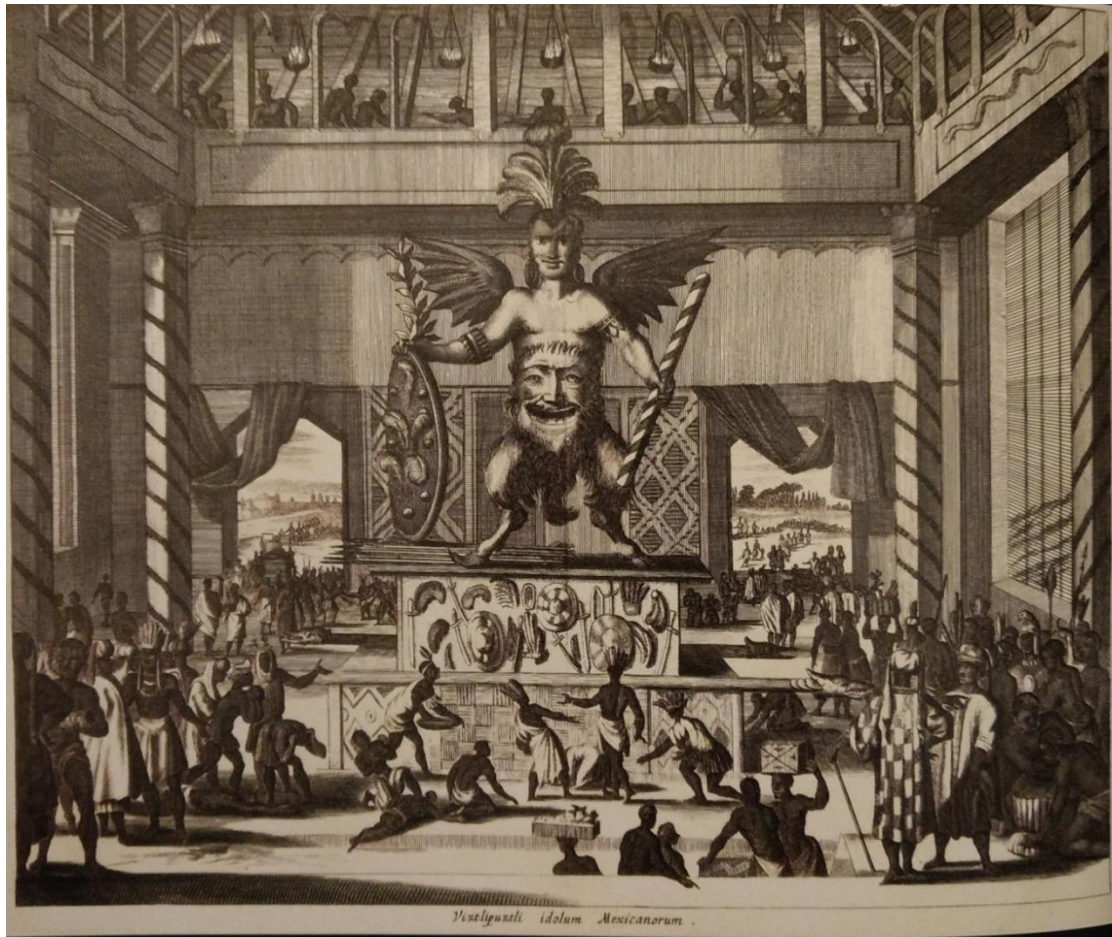


Figure 3.

“Huitzilopochtli Idol of the Mexicans.” Engraving in Arnoldus Montanus, *De Nieuwe en onbedende wereld, of Beschryving van America en 't zuid-land* (The New and Unknown World, or Description of America and the Southland), Amsterdam, 1671.

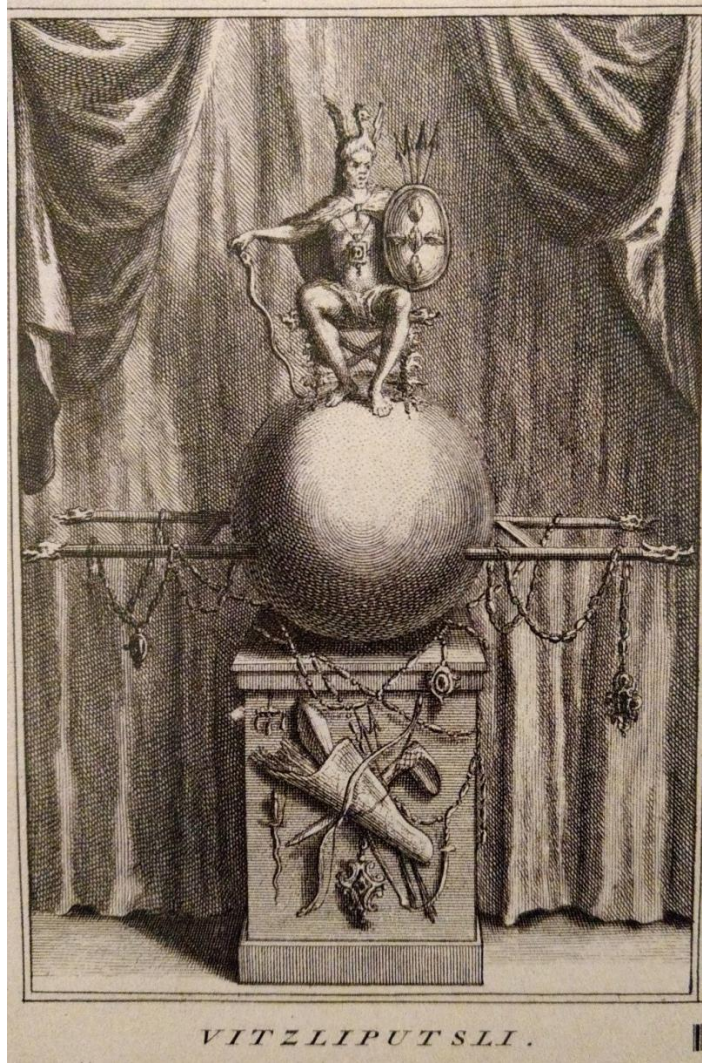


Figure 4.
“Vitzliputzli.” Bernard Picart (French, 1673-1733). Engraving in Jean Fredric Bernard, *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, Amsterdam, 1723-1743, vol. 3.



Figure 5.
 “Birth of Huitzilopochtli.” Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, ca. 1578-1579. Book 3, chapter 1.



Figure 6.
 “Vitzilubochtli.” Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, ca. 1578-1579. Book 1, chapter 1.



Figure 7.
 “Huitzilopochtli worshipped.” Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, ca. 1578-1579. Book 1, chapter 1.



Figure 8.
 “Mexicans leave supplies for the Spaniards.” Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, ca. 1578-1579. Book 12, chapter 18.



Figure 9.
“Montezuma dead in the waters of the Grand Canal.” Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*,
ca. 1578-1579. Book 12, chapter 23.



Figure 10.
 “Portrait of Montezuma II, Xocoyotzin.” Attributed to Antonio Rodríguez, ca. 1680-1691.
 Oil on canvas.



Figure 11.
 “Spaniards marching.” Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, ca. 1578-1579. Book 12,
 forward (*Al lector*).



Figure 12.
 “Spaniards march to Tenochtitlan.” John Ogilby, *America*, 1671. Chapter 3.

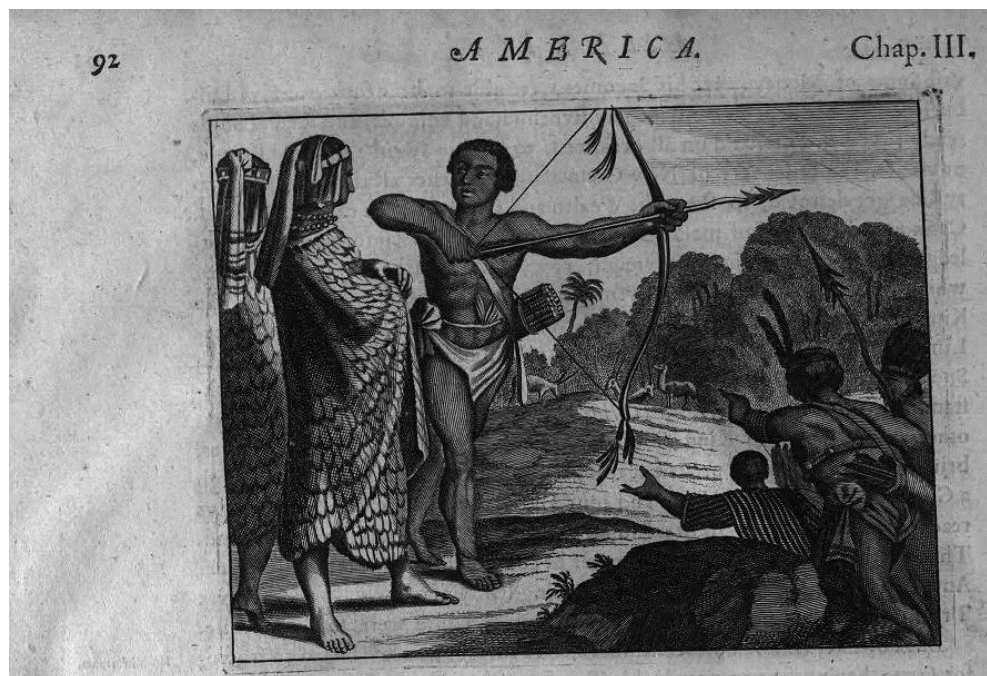


Figure 13.
 “Indigenous nobility and slaves.” John Ogilby, *America*, 1671. Chapter 3.



Figure 14.
 “Aztec Gods and Priests.” Bernard Picart (French, 1673-1733). Engraving in Jean Fredric Bernard, *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, Amsterdam, 1723-1743, vol. 3.



Figure 15.

“Aztec Gods and Priests,” detail. Bernard Picart (French, 1673-1733). Engraving in Jean Fredric Bernard, *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, Amsterdam, 1723-1743, vol. 3.



Figure 16.

“The Mercury of the Mexicans worshipped at Cholula under the name of Quetzalcoatl.” Bernard Picart (French, 1673-1733). Engraving in Jean Fredric Bernard, *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, Amsterdam, 1723-1743, vol. 3.



Figure 17.
 “The *Mexicans* participate in the Hunting Festival.” Bernard Picart (French, 1673-1733).
 Engraving in Jean Fredric Bernard, *Religious Ceremonies of the World*, Amsterdam, 1723-1743,
 vol. 3.



Figure 18.
 “Montezuma’s Headdress.” Feather, precious stones, and gold. Sixteenth-century, Weltmuseum
 Wien, Vienna.



Figure 19.
 “Copy of Montezuma’s Headdress.” Gold and feathers. 1985, Museo Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Mexico City.



Figure 20.
 “Displaced Emperors: Linz, Austria.” Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, 1997.

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Collections Department Intern: Mabree-Gerrer Museum of Art, Shawnee, Oklahoma (Summer 2014)

Presentations and Publications

28th Annual Oklahoma Conference of Art Historians: "Internal Conflicts: Representation in the Mainstream Museum" University of Tulsa-School of Art, Design and Art History (Spring 2018)

Object Essay, Oklahoma State University Museum of Art, Academic Engagements, *Femfolio* Exhibition: "Rejecting Traditional Representations of Gender: Mary Beth Edelson's *Goddess Head/Soft* in Reference to Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*," Stillwater, Oklahoma (Fall 2017)

<https://museum.okstate.edu/academic-engagements>